Russian Public Opinion and the Two Chechen Wars, 1994-1996 and 1999-2002: Formation and Evolution

A PhD Thesis
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I declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own.

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Thanks must also go out to all the people I interviewed, from the draftees lucky to survive the Chechen war to the workers of Russian media and civil organizations, without your individual '15 minutes of time,' this thesis would have been impossible.

With that all in mind, I hope this thesis broadens the reader's knowledge in ways both expected and unexpected.

Transliteration:

* Russian Transliteration in this thesis is based on the system developed by the United States Library of Congress, except in cases where a popularised place name is more common (for example, 'Chechnya' instead of 'Chechnia') and where the names of people are more easily recognizable ('Yavlinsky' instead of 'Iavlinski').

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Russian Public Opinion and the Two Chechen Wars, 1994-96 and 1999-2002: Formation and Evolution

Thesis Introduction

This thesis is to contribute to academic knowledge concerning Russian public opinion and the two wars in Chechnya, focusing on differences in perception of each war within the coinciding Russian political climate.

This thesis adds on to relevant academic literature pertaining to this subject in several ways, and represents a necessary approach on a topic in which the state of Russia's democracy can be tested, particularly as to what the status is of the Russian state as a democratic state or alternatively an authoritarian state. Frequently, as will be detailed, the subject of Russian public opinion on the Chechen wars will have been mentioned, and even explored in the context of academic writings. However, the author finds it necessary to put exactly this issue on a pedestal and observe how the very nature and status of Russian public opinion concerning the Chechen war issue reflects on the Russian regime, if indeed at all.

There are a great many facets to a study of this topic. Firstly (**chapter one**), in the context of a detailed literature review, finding and elaborating on an understanding of Russian public opinion is necessary in the earliest instance. Secondly (**chapter two**), a comparative examination of Russian public opinion and its contending views on each of the two wars must be scrutinized.

Thirdly (**chapter three**), the question of the cleavages in Russian public opinion on the Chechen wars must be explored. Based on available data, this section will attempt to establish sectional, gender, age and other separations in which there could exist differences within "general" Russian public opinion on the national level. Coinciding with this third chapter will be a review of other data found during research for this thesis that may have a debated application to increasing understanding of Russian public opinion.

Fourthly (**chapter four**), there will be an examination of the status of Russian public opinion and the Chechen wars in regard to efforts by the Russian government to manipulate the media. Next, in a **fifth chapter** based on data and research in this thesis, Russia's status as a 'democratic' state must be assessed. Accompanying this chapter (**five**) will be a short literature review covering democratic theory, which is of relevance to the discussion in that chapter but that has less bearing on the preceding research chapters. Finally, a **conclusion** must summarize the findings of this thesis, and include some relevant closing arguments in relation to this research.

Looking at the two wars in domestic Russian and international public opinion, the first Chechen war is widely considered to be less 'popular' than the second. This is due to the relative lack of open protest against the second war internally, as well as a continuing general international acceptance (outside of humanitarian groups) that the war, to an extent, is Russia's own internal affairs. In some ways, this is the case even disregarding the accompanying international war on terrorism in which President Vladimir Putin has sought to add the Chechen war onto its roll call. Such attempts, if successful, would place the Chechen war in a comfortable niche beside America's expanded global security policies and the military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq where any misdeeds on Russia's part more easily could be swept away in public opinion, both domestically and internationally.

What is meant by being less 'popular?' It is true that the second war seems to have more 'popular' support than the first war, for there have surely been fewer public expressions against Putin on this specific issue than for Yeltsin in his day, and this is the case for a number of reasons, as to be examined over the course of this thesis. The second war seems to have a heightened level of justification in the Russian public's mindset, and so the main research question of this thesis is to ask **why this difference exists**. Specifically, this thesis is meant also to explore the avenues of contextualisation in which the two separate Chechen wars are held, how Russian governmental policies have contributed to this changing context, and further to this, what can any differences tell us about the state of Russia's democracy, which is at the time of this writing (2007) in its sixteenth year.

Indeed, many academics and analysts take the subject matter of this thesis even as a commonly accepted 'given.' For example, in a UNISCI discussion paper, Javier Morales writes (in a footnote) as part of a larger discussion of President Vladimir Putin's 'political project' in reference to public opinion and the Chechen wars:

> 'The change in Russian public opinion towards the Chechen conflict was mainly due to this campaign of terrorist attacks. If the first Chechnya war had lacked public support, the second one started when the Russians rallied around Putin and his promises of an end to terrorism.'[1]

This is not to say that elements of this statement are not true, indeed some are. Instead this thesis seeks a detailed examination of such statements beyond the simplifications apparent in many such published articles and other texts.

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[1] Morales, Javier, 'Who Rules Russia Today? An Analysis of Vladimir Putin and His Political Project,' UNISCI Discussion Papers, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, January 2004, p. 3, footnote 12, http://www.ucm.es/info/unisci/Javier4.pdf.

Further, this thesis seeks to examine, as expressed by Stephen White, 'What do the Russians think?'[2] However, whereas White sought to ask this question in the broad scope of looking at various topics such as trust and ideological bases vis-à-vis Communist times versus ten years later, this paper intends to focus on Russian public opinion specifically in relation to the occurrence, for a great extent initiated by the Russian government, of Russia's first post-Soviet major internal military engagements. This thesis also will seek to answer the question posed by the analyst Timothy Thomas:

> 'How important is public opinion to the overall success of a military operation? In the information age, as Russians and Chechens clearly demonstrate, it is *more important than ever* [Thomas's italics].'[3]

At this point, a review of contemporary and parallel research must be held in which to establish the basis of this thesis.

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[2] White, Stephen, 'Ten Years On, What Do The Russians Think?,' Russia After Communism, (eds.) Rick Fawn and Stephen White, Frank Cass, London, 2002, p. 35.

[3] Thomas, Timothy L., 'Manipulating the Mass Consciousness: Russian and Chechen 'Information War' Tactics in the Second Chechen-Russian Conflict,' *The Second Chechen War*, (ed.) Anne Aldis, Conflict Studies Research Centre, No. 40, September 2000, p. 110 (pp. 110-125)

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Chapter One

Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review is written to explain to the reader where this thesis fits in with available academic and non-academic source material.

Therefore, primarily this chapter will seek to examine as accurately as possible:

- What is known about Russian public opinion, and what is not.
- How Russian public opinion in the post-Communist era previously has been explained.
- What studies have been conducted on the issue of the Chechen war and on the role of Russian society in political discourse on the war.

Although some studies on determining the level of democracy in Russia based on this research will be mentioned in this chapter, most study and debate on this subject will be saved for discussion in a fifth chapter written solely on the topic of learning *what is the Russian regime* (regarded as a question of democracy versus authoritarianism). This analysis will be conducted using prevailing democratic theory and will be supported by the findings of this thesis on public opinion and the Chechen wars.

Firstly, literature on the theory of public opinion must be reviewed. Second, literature already detailing Russian public opinion's regard for the military, both on the Chechen war and on

particular issues such as the draft, must be examined. Third, previous literature on Chechnya and the Chechen war must of course be covered. Finally, in preparation for a larger discussion in chapter four, secondary sources considering the Russian mass media as well as other influences internally and externally (internationally) must be reviewed. A short conclusion will summarize this chapter and lead into the next where a comparative study of overall Russian public opinion on the Chechen war will take place.

Public Opinion Theory and Political Society

This paper will allege that Russian public opinion only has relevance in society to the extent of the immediacy of the problem. Without political actor accountability and the rule of law, even this impact is abated substantially. Each of these issues will be studied in time.

The study of public opinion has a long history; some of which must be reviewed here.

Bernard Hennessy, in his 1985 book Public Opinion, gives one of the best dialogues on what exactly is public opinion in the recent era. One of his first points of discussion is of importance for this thesis; this is the difference between beliefs, values, an attitude, and an opinion. Opinions at Hennessy's endpoint are 'judgments about objects.'[4] That is: what people 'think' based on their values, beliefs, and more generalized attitudes in consideration of any particular issue, or 'object.' Part of assessing public opinion in this thesis will be an attempt at a greater understanding of what are the values, beliefs, and attitudes of the Russian people on the Chechen war, and what this means in consideration of Russian democracy. Most studies of democracy agree that the premise depends on more than just voting for representatives every so often, but to what degree does the Russian public accept a wider scope in having 'democracy?' Extending

[4] Hennessy, Bernard, Public Opinion, 5th edition, Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, Monterey CA, 1985, p. 5.

from this, what can an analysis of Russian public opinion based primarily on the Chechen wars inform us about Russian democracy?

Further, a debate of what is public opinion as extended from individual opinion is in order. This is an issue of some long discussion; there are many definitions in academia for this. Hennessy, through his study of Walter Lippman[5] and others, comes to the conclusion that in general:

> '[...]public opinion is the complex of preferences expressed by a significant number of persons on an issue of general importance.'[6]

In an examination of Russian public opinion on the Chechen wars, it is also a necessity to consider Hennessy's 'five factors'[7] in understanding public opinion. They are:

1) 'the presence of an issue'
2) 'the nature of publics'
3) 'the complex of preferences in the publics'
4) 'the expression of opinion'
5) the size of the interested public

Russia in the post-Communist era has a unique presence and understanding concerning all five of these factors. On the Chechen wars, these elements, and the research in this thesis, can reflect on how the Russian government has responded to, or ignored, Russian public opinion in differing circumstances.

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[5] Lippmann, Walter, Public Opinion, Macmillan Company, New York, 1947.
[6] Hennessy, Bernard, Public Opinion, 5th edition, Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, Monterey CA, 1985, p. 8.
[7] Information from Hennessy, Bernard, Public Opinion, 5th edition, Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, Monterey CA, 1985, pp. 8-14.

Additional analysis of what makes an opinion must be explored. Over the course of this thesis, many attempts will be made to describe Russian public opinion in a meaningful way. Robert Lane and David Sears, in their own book entitled Public Opinion, espouse two concepts for a proper description of an opinion: 'direction' and 'intensity.'[8] Both of these ideas are of importance.

Direction has the meaning that an issue 'includes some affective or emotional quality of approving or disapproving of something.'[9] Intensity depends additionally on how strongly opinion is in favour or against on any particular issue. Understanding Russian public opinion on the Chechen war will frequently depend on how the Chechen war matters for public opinion in any given context, and then to what degree the war is an emotional issue. As will be shown, the Putin administration has sought to dilute the intensity of Russian public opinion through an active PR policy in regard to the Chechen war, while acknowledging that the public portrayal of the war could potentially affect its continuing prosecution. This is in contrast to the first Chechen war where the Yeltsin administration had arguably less understanding of the role of public opinion, and thereby had a far more vague policy towards winning the public relations war on the issue. Extensive study of these concepts will be all too necessary for understanding the effects of the war for public opinion.

Perhaps the best book looking at Russian public opinion in general in the post-Soviet era is Matthew Wyman's 1997 book Public Opinion in Post-Communist Russia.[10] From his examinations of continuity in Russian political culture to his analysis of Russian attitudes towards the collapse of the USSR, market economy and the unity of Russia itself, there has never before or since been such a complete review of Russian public opinion. Particularly, Wyman's

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[8] Lane, Robert E. and David O. Sears, Public Opinion, Prentice Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs NJ, 1964, pp. 6-9.
[9] *Ibid*, pp. 6.
[10] Wyman, Matthew, Public Opinion in Post-Communist Russia, Macmillan Press Ltd, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York, 1997.

eighth chapter has proven insightful as to the issues that this thesis attempts to explore in the third chapter covering cleavages in Russian public opinion on the Chechen wars. He writes:

> 'What is clear, however, is that understanding the social bases behind attitudes in Russia will improve our ability to identify likely directions of change.'[11]

This thesis has, for instance, attempted to expand on the understanding of cleavages as he outlined in that chapter. Ultimately, in further looking at his data, this thesis seeks to focus only on Russian opinion and the Chechen wars but, in consideration of his conclusions, such as when he states, '[...]what is crucial for Russia's democratic prospects is the behaviour of her political elites,'[12] study here has sought to use Wyman's quality of analysis as a benchmark on which a better understanding of the topic at hand can be brought.

Furthermore, Timothy Colton's book on Transitional Citizens has a great deal of information and analysis on Russian public opinion in the realm of what has become Russian 'citizenship.' While he spends very little time in covering the Chechen war, Colton's statistical analysis of party support in Russia on various issues is unparalleled. I especially like his characterisation of Boris Yeltsin's special place in Russia's political landscape:

> 'Russian presidential elections, where individual politicos rather than party organizations compete, and their faces smile out at voters from countless billboards and television screens, would seem to afford even greater latitude to personalism and charisma. Not all those faces are equal in stature. Of the Russian presidential personalities on our radar screen, Yeltsin is a rare bird, the patriarch whose name--like Charles de Gaulle's in France, Nelson Mandela's in South Africa, or Lech Walesa's in Poland—is indelibly

[11] *Ibid*, p. 229.
[12] *Ibid*, p. 148.

linked with epoch-making events and with the laying of the foundations of the political system.'[13]

Given this position in Russian society, this must explain part of why Yeltsin was able to survive the negative reaction towards the first war in Chechnya. Psychologically and politically in regard to Russian society, it must also necessarily correlate that Putin would lack such a secure consideration in his own era. On a more basic level, it must be emphasized that, for Colton, Russian public opinion is indeed important:

'There is no need to wonder whether Russian voters hold politically relevant opinions: they do.'[14]

There are few things that let the wind out of a Russian public opinion researcher's sails more than the argument that Russian public opinion does not matter, as referred to next.

The more sceptical argument for Russian public opinion must be attributed to Vladimir Shlapentokh in his *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* article entitled, 'No One Needs Public Opinion Data in Post-Communist Russia.' In this article, Shlapentokh argues that:

'Today, the major political forces in Russia seem completely immune to the voice of the people. They look upon the masses as an ever mutable thing, a population that endures rather than rebels, obeys the current political authority, and even votes for it. In their

[13] Colton, Timothy, Transitional Citizens: Voters and What Influences Them in the New Russia, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA and London, 2000, p. 175.
[14] *Ibid*, p. 139.

opinion, the fate of the country has always been determined by the politicians in downtown Moscow, and particularly by those who control the army and police.'[15]

While taking into account the similarities that Shlapentokh relates between the roles of Russian and Soviet public opinion in their respective governments, it could be argued that Russian public opinion has not been ignored as easily as he professes. This is not to say that there ever has been any quid-pro-quo in the triangle between Russian public opinion, Russian government and the Chechen wars, instead it is perhaps to suggest that there is far from a complete lack of a relationship. While alleging any sort of impact is not a facet of this thesis, it is nevertheless an interesting focal point of study.

Emphasizing this difference, John O'Loughlin argues that Russian public opinion is actually coming closer to Western public opinions, such as, specifically, American public opinion:

'The vast majority of Russians however, like the vast majority of Americans, do not have a strong interest in world affairs; only events inside the Russian Federation (including Chechnya), in the "near abroad" and the fate of ethnic Russians outside Russia's borders command public attention.'[16]

O'Loughlin argues that Russia has an incomplete democracy, but that Russia has also:

'[...]seen a dramatic switch from a foreign policy immune to public pressure to a close correlation of public opinion with military actions, especially in the "near abroad"[17]

[15] Shlapentokh, Vladimir, 'No One Needs Public Opinion Data in Post-Communist Russia,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 4, Dec. 1999, p. 458. (pp. 453-460)
[16] O'Loughlin, John, 'Geopolitical Fantasies and Ordinary Russians: Perception and Reality in the Post-Yeltsin Era,' Paper first presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Pittsburgh, PA, 6 April 2000 in the panel on "Geopolitical Trends and Futures at the Turn of the Century," p. 3.
[17] *Ibid.*

Using a number of public opinion surveys, O'Loughlin effectively shows how the attitudes of Russian public opinion, especially in foreign policy areas, are remarkably parallel to Western public attitudes on foreign policy and their separations from everyday life. Such similarities are briefly to be examined in this thesis in chapter two.

Research in this thesis sometimes will utilize public opinion polling data. Some sources of this data will be professional polling services in Russia, such as the All-Russia Centre for the Study of Public Opinion, henceforth referred to by its Russian initials (*Vserossiiskii Tsentr po Izucheniiu Obshchestvennogo Mneniia* or VTsIOM). Also to be used will be polling data from the Public Opinion Foundation (*Fond Obshchestvennoe Mnenie* or FOM) and from ROMIR Monitoring (*Rossiiskoe Obshchestvennoe Mnenie I Issledovanie Rynka*). This data, of course, has the accompanying limitations, such as distribution, question format, and weighting, and these issues must be discussed in the context of which the data is used. Memoirs of political actors can also be used to augment this polling data, as well as interviews conducted by the author for the purpose of this thesis.

In the area of polling data, VTsIOM, specifically under the leadership of renowned sociologist Yuri Levada, will be seen to possess remarkable clarity and reliability, having conducted surveys on the subject of Russian public opinion since the Soviet era.[18] As detailed on the VTsIOM website of March 2000:[19]

> 'The Russian Center for Public Opinion and Market Research (VCIOM) is the largest organization in Russia conducting marketing, social and political research on the basis of

[18] Such was the case until, beyond the purview of this thesis, in September 2003 VTsIOM was taken over by the Russian state under the Putin administration, leaving Levada and his sociologists to be forced to form a string of newly-named organizations that have culminated in today's Levada-centre.
[19] www.wciom.ru. Valid as of 3 March 2000 (No longer availabile).

regular mass surveys in Russia, CIS and the Baltic States since 1987. Thirty VCIOM regional branch offices and more than 3500 trained interviewers are involved in carrying out various research programs. VCIOM has been accumulating unique trends reflecting the dynamics of the society and market. VCIOM issues a number of special publications based on the collected data.'

Also very good, having started in 1992 (after breaking away from VTsIOM), FOM had a strong and consistent structure for survey conduct. On the subject of their direct home polling data:[20]

'Weekly nationwide population polls are conducted with representative samples in 100 settlements in 44 regions, territories and republics in all Russian economic-geographic areas. Interviews are conducted in the respondents' homes. Sample size: 1500 respondents. The margin of statistical error does not exceed 3.6%. Additional weekly representative polls are conducted in Moscow (sample size: 600 respondents, 100 of whom are included in a national sample).'

ROMIR has similar, and no less professional, origins from which to analyse Russian public opinion. Their web site for a long time has boasted that:[21]

'The agency was formed by leading specialists in the field of sociology, psychology, statistics, and data processing.

Our staff are 50 well-educated, experienced researchers and motivated young professionals, all of them are bilingual. They have been trained in various qualitative and quantitative research techniques or in statistics and analysis in West European and US

[20] www.fom.ru. See 'Strategies and Methods' sub-page. Originally from website: May 2000, Updated 19 May 2005.
[21] www.romir.ru. 20 May 2000.

Universities, Gallup International and Research International affiliates. Our staff is being regularly trained at seminars organized by WAPOR and ESOMAR.

Our team of part-time interviewers totals to 1,000 in Russia and to 500 in the CIS and Baltic states.'

Particularly their associations with Western polling organizations such as Gallup are quite impressive, and should be taken into account when weighing their polling source data.

Russian election theory will also have a prominent position within this paper. Few books detail the method of understanding voting, referendums, and opinion polling in Russia better than the 1997 book, How Russia Votes, by Stephen White, Richard Rose and Ian McAllister. In this book, the authors explored Russia's progress to democracy at that time and the methodology of Russia's electoral system. Although ten years old now, their examinations of how to best accurately poll Russian public opinion still have usefulness today. Their definition of opinion polling as 'a sample of the electorate rather than a tabulation'[22] and their explanations as to how such a sample could be reliable in studying Russian public opinion have been useful in many ways in the development of this thesis.

A 2004 *Post-Soviet Affairs* article by Richard Rose, Neil Munro and William Mishler brings this data more up-to-date. Using Rose's New Russia Barometer polling data from 2003, they find that Russians considered their level of democracy far from ideal, but that there is a level of acceptance of this fact. To the point where there is 'no majority for any alternative,' Russian public opinion has reached a 'stable equilibrium' that can only be changed by upcoming events, in which Rose et al. project the end of Putin's second term as being a 'predictable challenge.'[23]

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[22] White, Stephen, Richard Rose, and Ian McAllister, How Russia Votes, Chatham House Publishers, Chatham NJ, 1997, p.70.

[23] Rose, Richard, Neil Munro and William Mishler, 'Resigned Acceptance of an Incomplete Democracy: Russia's Political Equilibrium,' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 20, No. 3, Jul.-Sept. 2004, pp. 195-218.

Rose et al. have extremely good data to back up these assertions and are necessary to consider in the context of this research.

Expanding on this research, Rose, Munro and Mishler published in 2006 their material in a book entitled Russia Transformed based further on Rose's New Russia Barometer surveys. In their research, in understanding the 'steady-state equilibrium' and 'equilibrium of support'[24] for the existent regime in Russia, they spend much time considering what:

> '[...]risks that could challenge the regime if they came to pass, such as the outbreak of another ethnic conflict like Chechnya or another nuclear accident like Chernobyl.'[25]

This terminology in examining Russia is found often to be true in the context of this thesis; the wars in Chechnya have threatened the viability of the continuation of the regime in the present state, however the Putin administration (again within the context of this thesis) seems to have weathered the storm.

We already know also that Russian public opinion is moving increasingly away from a perceived dependence on the state. In research by N. I. Lapin, he found that percentages of those who depend 'only on you and those close to you' for 'improvement of your life' rose from 55% in 1994 to 78% in 2002.[26] Along these lines, Lapin also found that between 1990 and 2002, trust in 'institutions of authority' fell in all cases except the Presidency.[27]

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[24] Rose, Richard, William Mishler and Neil Munro, Russia Transformed, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge UK, 2006, pp. 16-17.
[25] *Ibid*, p. 186.
[26] Lapin, N.I., 'How the Citizens of Russia Feel and What They Are Striving For,' *Russian Social Science Review*, Vol. 45, No. 6, Nov.-Dec. 2004, p. 6. (pp. 4-21)
[27] *Ibid*, p. 15.

We further have some evidence from Lapin's data and analysis that, over the course of the overall time period studied in this thesis, Russian public opinion, given a choice of 'individual freedom' or 'personal safety,' changed to value personal safety more. Lapin cites survey data showing that, in 1994, 47% chose individual freedom as more important versus 31% who selected personal safety. In comparison, in 2002, only 20% picked individual safety against 56% who put personal safety as more important.[28]

Combining the above findings in Lapin's work, in the connection between trust in institutions and values associated with safety versus freedom, he makes the interesting point that:

> 'At the cutting edge of these interweavings a contradiction has emerged between the value of the freedom of the individual and the fact that his safety has not been insured. An echo of this contradiction now is the critically low level of Russians' trust in the institutions of authority. As a result, the first stage of the transformation of Russian cannot be completed successfully *as long as the freedom of the individual stands in opposition to the fact that his life is not adequately protected*[...]'[29]

As to be discussed in chapter five, this thesis agrees that as long as freedom and the protection of life are considered to be contradictory, in the form of lacking the rule of law, little progress can be made or stability found in Russia's democracy.

Valid parallel research to this thesis also can be found in Theodore P. Gerber and Sarah E. Mendelson's paper on 'Russian Public Opinion on Human Rights and the War in Chechnya.'[30] They have a decidedly negative opinion of the state of Russian democracy, finding that support

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[28] *Ibid*, p. 18.
[29] *Ibid*, p. 20.
[30] Gerber, Theodore P. and Sarah E. Mendelson, 'Russian Public Opinion on Human Rights and the War in Chechnya,' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 18, No. 4, Oct.-Dec. 2002, pp. 271-305.

for human rights and demand for civil liberties is quite low. This thesis will look at similar issues, and Gerber and Mendelson's paper was instrumental in providing an interesting basis for analysis and discussion.

Bias as an issue in the study of Russian public opinion is important to consider further. Adam Berinsky and Joshua Tucker have researched extensively this subject in their paper on 'Transitional Survey Analysis: Measuring Bias in Russian Public Opinion.' Representing a crucial side-note in a consideration of this thesis, their studies of systematic biases and the 'silent voices' in Russian society are quite important. Essentially, they were looking for trends among those respondents to surveys who refused to conclusively answer questions on certain topics (i.e. 'don't knows' and 'difficult to answer').

Using three waves of surveys conducted surrounding the 1995 and 1996 Russian Duma and Presidential elections, Berinsky and Tucker found that, unlike other issues they researched, the questions of law and order and on Chechnya did not reveal a 'consistent direction to the sentiments of the question abstainers.'[31] When they tried to analyse these 'silent voices' more deeply, they found 'no strong pattern of difference.'[32] This study is important in the context of this paper by perhaps showing the data environment of the abstainers present in all of the survey results presented herein, and to what extent possible must not in such cases be overlooked.

The political society of Russia is also at issue here. What role do elites play in relation to the regime and to public opinion? Linz and Stepan refer to political society as:

[31] Berinsky, Adam J. and Joshua Tucker, 'Transitional Survey Analysis: Measuring Bias in Russian Public Opinion,' A paper prepared for the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, 2-6 Apr. 2003, p. 16.
[32] *Ibid*, p. 20.

'[...]that arena of the polity where self-organizing and relatively autonomous groups, movements, and individuals attempt to articulate values, to create associations and solidarities, and advance their interests.'[33]

By this definition of political society, Russia's experience with attempting democratisation has followed Huntington's rollback theory on the 'reverse wave' of democratic progress (as also to be discussed in chapter five). Russia's autonomous groups, movements, and individuals have focussed on opposition to an authoritarian centre: over time becoming more difficult to criticize freely and even more difficult to dislodge from power. At the same time, when reform has been sought after by the government, the centre is unable to break the bureaucratic deadlock of the Soviet authoritarian regime that not so long ago preceded it.

The authoritarian counter to political society is perhaps the movement against local government and distrust of the ability of the electorate to choose new leadership. This is indeed a lack of trust going in both directions, from leadership and elites towards the populace, and the populace towards the former, as detailed by Richard Rose.[34] As Pavel Baev discusses[35], President Putin's regime has sought to establish order through the added centralization of power and the utilization of his 'friends' in the secret services:

'For Putin, with his initially narrow political base, it was only natural to look upon the special services as the main pool of cadre for his undertakings in reshuffling and reinvigorating the state machinery.'[36]

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[33] Linz, Juan and Alfred Stepan, 'Toward Consolidated Democracies,' *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 7, No. 2, Apr. 1996, pp. 14-33.
[34] Rose, Richard, 'Postcommunism and the Problem of Trust,' The Global Resurgence of Democracy, Second edition, (eds.) Larry Diamond and Marc E. Plattner, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore MD and London, 1996, pp. 251-263.
[35] Baev, Pavel, 'Instrumentalizing Counterterrorism for Regime Consolidation in Putin's Russia,' *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 27, No. 4, July/Aug. 2004, pp. 337-52.
[36] *Ibid*, p. 341.

Even in this context of possible reform, at many points, Russia's bureaucracy is still extraordinarily rigid, which in combination with the entrenched 'special service networks,' prevents Putin from successfully modernizing the country.[37]

A war of the nature of Russia's conflicts in Chechnya can be deduced in this atmosphere to almost have a mind of its own. Putin can only respond to developments in the war; new means at his disposal for addressing the war beyond the secret services have been exhausted.

This thesis will also be looking at the environment in which Russian public opinion exists in the context of the global war on terrorism. President Putin, from the time of the terrorist attacks in the United States of 11 September 2001 (which will be an event and date of focus in the construction of argument in this thesis), has sought to portray the Chechen war as being part of a greater struggle against global terrorism. This has been the case both to enhance support for the war domestically and to dampen opposition to the at times brutal military campaign internationally. John O'Loughlin, Gearoid O Tuathail and Vladimir Kolossov term this representation of 11 September as being systematic as a 'global Chechnya.'[38]

Furthermore, they dispute the depiction of Putin's policy of open support for the international war on terrorism, even when the war brought American troops to countries of the former Soviet Union, as being 'risky' in terms of domestic policies.[39] It would be 'risky,' they allege, only 'if it were opposed by a large majority of Russian voters and/or by the political elite.'[40] Persuasively, using in part polling data, they find that:

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[37] Baev, Pavel, 'The Evolution of Putin's Regime,' *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol.51, No.6, November-December 2004, pp.3-13.
[38] O'Loughlin, John, Gearoid O Tuathail and Vladimir Kolossov, 'Putin's Risky Westward Turn,' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 56, No. 1, January 2004, p. 4. (pp. 3-34)
[39] Consideration of this topic is also explored in a paper by Gail W. Lapidus entitled: 'Putin's War on Terrorism: Lessons From Chechnya.' She examines particularly how Putin has represented the Chechen war in the post 9/11 era, and then scrutinizes some facets of this projection in detail. See Lapidus, Gail W., 'Putin's War on Terrorism: Lessons From Chechnya,' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 18, No. 1, January-March 2002, pp. 41-48.
[40] *Ibid*, p. 4.

'[...]a large majority of Russians support [Putin's] foreign policy in the abstract but the population is split on some key policies the President is pushing,' while at the same time: 'the elite (intellectual, political and military) remain much more critical of the US.'[41]

Much as with the earlier noted John O'Loughlin paper, they find that Russian public opinion is much like other democratic societies in that Russians 'are much more concerned with domestic circumstances than with foreign policy.'[42] This has bearing specifically in the degree to which Russia is however a democratic society. Elements of this thesis must necessarily question these assumptions in more depth.

It is already known that Russian public opinion has been responsive to the portrayal of the Chechen war by the state. Corresponding to this, Russian public opinion has had more confidence in Putin as a leader than it had of Yeltsin as a leader. Each time the Russian government rose to the challenge of confronting Chechnya militarily, the Russian public has been compliant in this. However, research in this thesis will show that public opinion consistently does tire of the war, at times quite quickly. Considering these cross-alterations, this thesis seeks to add to academic knowledge of the existence of Russian public opinion in Russia's democracy and how the wars in Chechnya have influenced this discourse.

Public Opinion and the Military

Elements of understanding the two Chechen wars require a brief discussion of the state of the Russian army, and how Russia's conscript army related to Russian public opinion. Following the break-up of the Soviet Union, the Russian military reformed as singularly 'Russian,' but

[41] *Ibid*, p. 25.
[42] *Ibid*, p. 26.

along essentially Soviet operational lines. Very little practical change occurred during this crossover. For Russia, the Russian military was essentially a downsized Soviet military defending a smaller territory plus maintaining bases and operations in the now-foreign post-Soviet sphere (i.e. both external and internal in relation to former Soviet territory).

Russian public opinion was affected in several ways by this change. Frequently, public opinion recognized the 'dilapidated state of the army'[43] and responded as such.

New political actors and organizations appeared in Russian life to attempt to influence public opinion and the Russian government in order to improve conditions for soldiers in the Russian military.

One well known such organization, which will be referred to frequently over the course of this paper, is the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers. Founded in 1990 by Maria Kirbasova, this organization has sought to monitor abuse within the military and secure some degree of rights for soldiers. The struggles of this organization have been discussed in detail by Andrew Spivak and William Pridemore and warrants interest in any discussion of this subject.[44]

Pavel Baev again studies the Russian military and its policies on regionalism in his chapter, 'Military Aspects of Regionalism.' The effects of the two Chechen wars are reviewed briefly in this short piece. This paper will agree with some aspects of Baev's writing; it is undoubtedly true that 'the First Chechen War was a multi-dimensional disaster that served no rational political purpose and inflicted much damage on every component of Russia's national interest.'[45]

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[43] Spivak, Andrew L. and William Alex Pridemore, 'Conscription and Reform in the Russian Army,' *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol.51, No.6, November-December 2004, pp. 33-43.
[44] *Ibid*, pp. 39-40.
[45] Baev, Pavel K., 'Military Aspects of Regionalism,' Russian Regions and Regionalism, (eds.) Graham P. Herd and Anne Aldis, RoutledgeCurzon, London and New York, 2003, p. 123. (pp. 120-137)

Baev then contrasts this in regard to the second Chechen war as he explains that the second war partially re-develops the 'identity and image' of the military.

He further explains the differences in public opinion on the two wars in Chechnya as being due to three reasons that took precedence during the second war:

1) 'The Kremlin's firmer control over and skilled manipulation of the media'[46]
2) Fear of terrorism
3) Frustration over economic decline

These points will be further covered over the course of this thesis. This paper will argue alongside Baev that these three reasons were entirely cogent to any understanding of differences in Russian public opinion between the two wars.

Chechnya

There are a number of books and articles written by both academics and non-academics concerning Chechnya in regard to some aspects of Russian public opinion that should be examined here.

Leon Aron firstly reflects on Russian democracy in the context of the war in Chechnya in an article in *Post-Soviet Affairs* in 1995:

> 'Yet the victory of the [August 1991] revolution did not bring about democracy. Indeed, the invasion of Chechnya in December 1994, less by the fact of the invasion itself than by

[46] *Ibid*, p.129.

the manner in which it was conceived, executed and prosecuted in the face of nearly unanimous popular protest, illuminated a deep residue of inherited authoritarianism and militarism lying just beneath the surface of Russia's first democracy. The war also revealed vast lacunae in the mechanisms for holding governmental institutions accountable for their actions.'[47]

His judgements in that article concerning a perceived need for authoritarianism among war supporters in some ways closely mirror future constructs of Russian political thought in regard to the war.

Most important academically concerning Russia's path into confrontation with Chechnya in the 1990s is perhaps John B. Dunlop's Russia Confronts Chechnya book. Dunlop details quite well how in some ways Yeltsin and his top advisors, in respect to Russian public opinion, unilaterally decided on war in Chechnya with little consideration of how the public would react to this, especially if the war was not short and militarily concise.[48]

No study of Russian public opinion on the Chechen wars, and particularly on the first war, is complete without an examination of the journalist Anatol Lieven's 1998 book, Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power.

Lieven's study of five shortages[49] is valuable in looking at why Russian public opinion did not support the first war. These 'shortages' were:

1) Shortage of Training and Equipment

[47] Aron, Leon, 'Russia Between Revolution and Democracy,' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 11, No. 4, October-December 2005, p. 305. (pp. 305-339)
[48] Dunlop, John B., Russia Confronts Chechnya, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998.
[49] Lieven, Anatol, Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power, Yale University Press, New Haven CT and London, 1998, pp.274-290.

2) Shortage of Men

3) Shortage of Money

4) Shortage of Honesty

5) Shortage of Unity

Lieven's further examination of the failure of Russia to win the propaganda war in the first Chechen war will also be particularly indispensable in examining changes in media policy during the second war. [50]

Another book detailing the Chechen wars specifically is Matthew Evangelista's 2002 book, The Chechen Wars: Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union? Evangelista covers the reasons for war and the situations surrounding the beginning of each of the two conflicts. Primarily in reference again to regionalism, Evangelista studies the point of whether the Chechen wars were endemic of a Russian political, cultural and societal system that was destined to separate over time or would it stabilize in the present Russian political form of post-Soviet Russian federalism. Using Russia's settlements with Tatarstan and other ethno-territorial regions over the political question as a benchmark, the Chechen wars are in this book an examination of what made Chechnya unique in arousing military conflict.

Concerning public opinion and public support for the second war, Evangelista makes a number of assertions relevant to study in this thesis. One such statement is that:

> 'Vladimir Putin, appointed prime minister and heir apparent by Boris Yeltsin just days after the attack on Dagestan, seized on the opportunity to prosecute the war while it still enjoyed public support.'[51]

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[50] *Ibid.* pp. 119-121.

This view of coincidentally supported justification (in Russian public opinion) for the second war is vital to recall in consideration of changes in Russian public opinion concerning each war in turn.

Parallel in many ways to the topic of this thesis is Dmitri Trenin and Aleksei Malashenko's 2004 book with Anatol Lieven, Russia's Restless Frontier. Trenin and Malashenko's chapters on the effects of the Chechen wars on Russian society and in regard to the 'Islamic factor' are cogent in any study of Russian public opinion on this topic.

With direct bearing on this thesis, Trenin and Malashenko state that 'public opinion in Russia on the Chechen war has fluctuated, reflecting developments on the battlefield.'[52] This paper will disagree on this point; Russian public opinion will be shown to reflect *perceptions of policy* in regard to developments on the battlefield. In this paper, it will be shown that, *only* when leaders are shown through numerous polities to be strong in regard to the war, *then* there is general support for the war. When leadership is perceived as weak, then support drops precipitously.

Furthermore, Trenin and Malashenko state that:

> '[...]although opinion polls have made it possible to capture general trends in the public's attitude to the conflict in Chechnya, such findings can hardly be used as a basis for judging the conflict's impact on the popular state of mind in Russia.'[53]

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[51] Evangelista, Matthew, The Chechen Wars: Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union?, Brookings Institution Press, Washington DC, 2002, p. 64.
[52] Trenin, Dmitri V. and Aleksei V. Malashenko with Anatol Lieven, Russia's Restless Frontier: The Chechnya Factor in Post-Soviet Russia, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC, 2004, p. 49.
[53] *Ibid*, p. 50.

They are correct in this regard, although as will be argued, the popular state of mind in Russia can be examined in regard to public opinion polls on the war and on support for democracy within the context of government intervention and policies to engender support for the Chechen wars. These points must be explored further over the course of this thesis.

Chechnya Revisited, edited by Iu. K. Nikolaev, is an excellent collection of papers concerning aspects of the wars in Chechnya. The fourth chapter written by Dianne Leigh Summer is particularly interesting. In this section, entitled 'Success of Terrorism in War,' Summer finds in her conclusion that in reference to the first Chechen war, terrorism 'determined Chechnya's success and Russia's loss.'[54] This is an excessively strong statement that overlooks several matters, including that it lessens the redoubtable strength of the Chechen people when the struggle was based on nationalism and then confronted with invasion. Also the statement confuses guerrilla warfare, which has often been used by oppressed peoples to fight oppressors throughout history, with terrorism and its connotations of pointless attacks on civilians, a point which necessarily must be examined further over the course of this thesis.

John Russell wrote a well-known article, later made into a book chapter, on the subject of the perceptions of Chechens in Russian public opinion. Popularity of the second Chechen war in Russian public opinion can be linked to the rise of 'Islamic jihad' as a factor in the Chechen conflict. Russell has previously found that there has been a number of effects from the failures of the Chechen government in the interim period between 1996 and 1999 to reign in localised virtual anarchy, resulting in a number of kidnapping and murders, and also 'a series of public executions under the newly-imposed *sharia* law.' Russell finds that these occurrences have:

[54] Summer, Dianne Leigh, 'Success of Terrorism in War,' Chechnya Revisited, (ed.) Nikolaev, Iu. K., Nova Science Publishers, Inc., New York, 2003, p. 117. (pp.69-125)

'further alienated the West and diluted any romantic notions among Russians as to the rectitude of their cause; and the presence on Russian soil of foreign Islamic militants, the Wahhabites, who were portrayed as representing the same threat to Russian fundamentalists such as Osama Bin Laden did to the West [did not lessen these fears].'[55]

This thesis will seek to further investigate these topics.

Russell's later 2005 article entitled 'Terrorists, Bandits, Spooks and Thieves: Russian Demonisation of the Chechens Before and Since 9/11' is focussed on the ethnic consideration of Chechens by Russian public opinion. Russell's articles do well in exploring the ethnic element of examination, and in many ways, they provide crucial background for any exploration of how each of the wars were understood by public opinion on the level of the ethnic divide between Russians and Chechens.

Indeed looking again at the idea of a perception of the necessity for war:

'[...]by shamelessly playing the 'Islamic' card, Putin has effectively created in Chechnya a self-fulfilling prophecy. By offering those that still advocate any degree of Chechen separatism a choice between abject surrender and continuing a campaign of sabotage, any that follow the latter path are perceived in Russia and the West as advocates of the very Islamic terrorism against which Putin has warned.'[56]

This idea of the Chechen war as a policy presupposing its own reasoning is a vital perception that has much relevance in consideration of this topic as well.

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[55] Russell, John, 'Mujahadeen, Mafia and Madmen: Russian Perceptions of Chechens During the Wars in Chechnya, 1994-96 and 1999-2001,' Russia After Communism, (eds.) Rick Fawn and Stephen White, Frank Cass, London, 2002, p. 83.

[56] Russell, John, 'Terrorists, Bandits, Spooks And Thieves: Russian Demonisation of the Chechens Before and Since 9/11,' *Third World Quarterly – Journal of Emerging Areas*, Mar. 2005, p. 113.

The book Chechentsy: istoriia, sovremennost' written in part by members of the Russian Academies of Natural Sciences and Social Science and edited by Iu. A. Aidaeva is an exceptionally good collection of works on the general subject of the Chechen wars as well as the difficulties faced by the Chechen nation in history.[57] This book includes particularly important articles written and published also by the media in regard to the war and must be recalled in future arguments of this thesis.

Tracey German, through her work and her PhD attained by studying in the region, has written a book of good quality on the Chechen war, particularly on the period until the second war. Published in 2003, her view in her conclusion that the Russian government's ongoing approach to the territorial integrity of Russia as being non-negotiable is 'unrealistic'[58] in reference to the Chechen conflict should be considered particularly interesting, and will be considered in future.

Books on specific incidents will be of importance also. One such book on an individual subject is Viktor Stepakov's Bitva za <<Nord-Ost>>.[59] This book's step-by-step exploration of the Nord-Ost incident and the comparisons to past hostage crises, with quotes by victims, are quite interesting in the study of this episode, particularly from the book's relatively open anti-Chechen tone.

Stefan Hedlund, in his book on Russian Path Dependence where he reflects on where Russia might be headed in future, had this to say on the role of Chechnya in the evolution of Russia's post-Soviet era:

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[57] Aidaeva, Iu. A. (ed.), Chechentsy: istoriia, sovremennost, "Mir domu tvoemu," Moskva, 1996.
[58] German, Tracey C., Russia's Chechen War, RoutledgeCurzon, London and New York, 2003, p. 160.
[59] Stepakov, Viktor, Bitva za <<Nord-Ost>>, Izd-vo Ekhsmo, Moskva, 2003.

'By far the most troubling dimension of Putin's punitive agenda was his launching of the second war in Chechnya. Gross violations both of human rights and of international treaties to which Russia is committed have been amply demonstrated in numerous reports by reputable organizations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Doctors Without Borders. The conduct of the Russian armed forces in Chechnya has also been subjected to harsh criticism by Russian human rights advocates like Sergei Kovalev, who served briefly as human rights commissioner under Yeltsin.

In stark contrast to Yeltsin's war, however, this time round the reactions from foreign governments were muffled at best, and from the Russian public at large the proclaimed cause of dealing once and for all with the Chechens met broad support. Although such support tended to weaken with the increasing stream of Russian casualties, there would be nothing resembling the broad mobilization of discontent that faced the Yeltsin regime.

The near-total absence of serious political criticism against Putin's war in Chechnya also could be seen as a reflection of the broad successes that were scored in the second dimension of his political programme, that of achieving an emasculation of all effective political opposition in the Duma.'[60]

In a nutshell, many of these points confirm theories that will be explored over the course of this thesis. The idea of a parallel between the war in Chechnya and a silencing of opposition to the Kremlin, despite some remaining voices of protest, is a central theme to be examined herein.

Over the course of this thesis, many such arguments will be explored more extensively. What is the role of separatism in the Chechen wars, what is the theory of Russian reinstitution of law and

[60] Hedlund, Stefan, Russian Path Dependence, Routledge, London and New York, 2005, p. 298.

order in conducting the war, what is the role of Islam in the conflict, and most, importantly, how does Russian public opinion exist and change in regard to these and other factors?

Mass Media and Internal Influences on Russian Society

The role of the mass media in Russian society has been the subject of a great deal of debate in the post-Soviet era. In both Chechen wars, the Russian government has tried to control news coverage, as many argue, beyond heavily debated contemporary and necessary norms concerning secrecy in regard to tactical troop movements. Not surprisingly, in both the first and second Chechen wars, the Russian government has considered contact between journalists or news agencies and Chechen military and political actors to be against the interests of the Russian war effort.

In both wars, the Russian government has sought to make its portrayal of the conflict to be dominant, thereby attempting to have the 'friendliest' depiction possible for its actions in Russian public opinion. Although perhaps some direct influence exists here between media policy and the people, this thesis will not attempt to quantify this in any way. Instead, this paper will seek to examine the atmosphere created by the Russian government in relation to changing media policies on each Chechen war, and therefore what this developing situation says about Russian democracy. Thereby, research in part will examine this statement by Frances Foster:

> 'In Russia's case, however, the government effort to become the "monopoly of power" of information to its citizenry has proven to be not only futile but harmful.'[61]

[61] Foster, Frances H., 'Information and the Problem of Democracy: The Russian Experience,' Russian Media Law and Policy in the Yeltsin Decade: Essays and Documents, (eds.) Monroe E. Price, Andrei Richter, and Peter K. Yu, Kluwer Law International, The Hague, London, New York, 2002, p. 115. (pp. 95-118)

Further to this, in the first war, where public support could be seen as to be lacking, the Russian people frequently were less likely to accept official news coverage at face value. In the second war, however, when support seems to have been higher, the Russian people have been less concerned on the subject of discerning independent versus official coverage of the war in the media. How all of these factors come together will be a necessary focus of this thesis.

Part of a reinstitution of order following the first war in Chechnya reflected on the application of informal practices, known as the 'grey area,'[62] to journalism. Perceived mistakes in media policy during the first war, thereby allowing elements of coverage that enhanced opposition against the war, led the Russian government to refine its policy in this area. During the first war, the government's media policy was deficient almost to the point of irrelevance. Seeking to correct this deficiency, the Russian government has sought to define a stronger media policy during the second war, heightening control of the media to a point where many question the freedom of the media.[63]

Accordingly, Martin Dewhirst in his chapter on the subject details four types of censorship in the post-communist period by 2001. These are: (1) administrative censorship, (2) economic censorship, (3) censorship resulting from actions by or threats from criminals, and (4) censorship resulting from editorial policy.[64] In various ways, each of these applies to Russian policy on the Chechen war. All four types of censorship have relevance in melding the image that Putin has attempted to present in his Chechnya policy. Dewhirst's presentation of these elements in the context of pre-Soviet/Soviet period also has accurate bearing on any study of public opinion in Russia.

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[62] The 'grey' area as discussed in chapter five on democracy concerning the politically-unstable area between viable democracy and authoritarianism.
[63] Many relevant government acts are available in: Pravovye i eticheskie normy v zhurnalistike, Aspect Press, Moskva, 2004. Other applicable legislation of importance will be referred to over the course of this thesis.
[64] Dewhirst, Martin, 'Censorship in Russia, 1991 and 2001,' Russia After Communism, (eds.) Rick Fawn and Stephen White, Frank Cass, London, 2002, pp. 21 – 33.

Further to all four points, Laura Belin in her chapter on 'The Russian Media in the 1990s' highlights many of the examples of such censorship. Particularly on the issue of Dewhirst's second point and thereby on the fourth point as well:

> 'The financial vulnerability of Russian media was the key factor limiting journalists' ability to shape editorial policy independently during the 1990s.'[65]

Belin, in her chapter on 'The Kremlin Strikes Back,' found in her research on the election of the Unity party to power that:

> 'The newcomer Unity, which offered no clear ideology or program, received massive favourable publicity on Channels 1 and 2. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the air time devoted to various blocs on ORT and RTR revealed bias in favour of Unity but not the full extent of its advantages. The Kremlin's proxy benefited indirectly from a huge amount of coverage that showed Putin in a positive light (Putin endorsed Unity about a month before the election). In addition, sympathetic coverage of the military campaign in Chechnya boosted the government's popularity and created many opportunities to showcase Minister for Emergency Situations Sergei Shoigu, the top candidate on Unity's party list.'[66]

As previously noted, and as will be argued in this thesis, the Russian government has always seemed to think that public popularity for the war was necessary for its success. During the first war, when for the first time the Russian government attempted to fight information warfare (IW)

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[65] Belin, Laura, 'The Russian Media in the 1990s,' Russia After Communism, (eds.) Rick Fawn and Stephen White, Frank Cass, London, 2002, p. 154.
[66] Belin, Laura, 'The Kremlin Strikes Back: The Reassertion of State Power over the Russian Media,' Russian Media Law and Policy in the Yeltsin Decade: Essays and Documents, (eds.) Monroe E. Price, Andrei Richter, and Peter K. Yu, Kluwar Law International, The Hague, London, New York, 2002, p. 280. (pp. 273-301)

in a democratic environment, the effort was botched, to such an extent that during the second war, it is obvious that the Putin administration insisted on improvement. This second attempt at IW, as will be argued in this paper, has been extensive in some aspects, especially in theory, but also equally porous in some practical ways.

There is some literature that should be considered on this topic. Propaganda research and analysis has a long history. Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell's book, most recently published in 1999, Propaganda and Persuasion probably has the best history in recent times of the role of internal governmental influence on public opinion. As written by Jowett and O'Donnell:

> '[...]the use of propaganda as a means of controlling information flow, *managing public opinion* [my italics], or manipulating behaviour is as old as recorded history.'[67]

Furthermore, Jowett and O'Donnell finds that there are three elements on which success in propaganda are based, all of which are important for understanding its role in Russian society. These are:[68]

1) The perceived necessity of winning the information war
2) The increase in 'sophistication' in propaganda distribution
3) The increase in understanding the role of propaganda itself

To these three 'elements,' this paper will add a fourth, that is, the establishment of a state capable of doing the three, and it is on this point where a primary difference can be found in relation to the two Chechen wars. As to be argued in detail, propaganda is more established for

[67] Jowett, Garth S. and Victoria O'Donnell, Propaganda and Persuasion, 3rd edition, Sage Publications Inc., Thousand Oaks CA, London, New Delhi, 1999, p. 47.
[68] See further: Jowett, Garth S. and Victoria O'Donnell, Propaganda and Persuasion, 1999.

the second war because the Russian state is more stable and ostensibly less wavering in policy for the second war.

Ellen Mickiewicz's book Changing Channels is quite valuable on the study of the mass media in post-Soviet Russia. Her section on 'Television at War' is quite revealing of how private Russian television regarded parts of the first Chechen war. In separate parts of this thesis, it is important to again review some of the points made in this chapter. As Mickiewicz indeed points out:

> 'It would be inaccurate to say that television "caused" Russian to turn away from the war in Chechnya. The cause was more complex.'[69]

The relationship of television to Russian public opinion and the wars in Chechnya will be further explored in chapter four of this thesis.

Terhi Rantanen's book The Global and the National has a great deal of insight into the effects of media on modern democracies. One purpose of this thesis is to make a diagnosis of changes in Russian democracy and Russian public opinion using the two wars in Chechnya as a reference. Relative to this, comparative elements will be used to show Russian society in dealing with the two Chechen wars in contrast to wars in other more established democracies within what is now known as the electronic 'information age.' This will in turn be defined as, for Russia, beginning with the domination of television over newspapers as a method of news reportage in 1991 (the period when television broadcasts overcame newspaper reportage as the dominant source of information in Russia).[70] Such a model in part also consists of defining the 'actors' of Russian public opinion, which is the nexus of understanding public opinion at least in the context of Russia's attempted modern 'democracy.'

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[69] Mickiewicz, Ellen, Changing Channels, Duke University Press, Durham NC and London, 1999, p. 258.
[70] Rantanen, Terhi, The Global and the National, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., Lanham MD and Boulder CO, 2002, p. 25.

There are a number of books from recent years written by journalists and researchers that are worth mentioning at this point. Their views, stories, observations, and arguments on the Chechen war, on Putin, on Yeltsin and on the state of Russian government will continue to be of value in many sections of this thesis. Some of these are: Andrew Jack's book Inside Putin's Russia (2004)[71], Lilia Shevtsova's books Yeltsin's Russia: Myths and Reality (1998)[72] and Putin's Russia (2003)[73], Peter Truscott's Putin's Progress (2004)[74], the many writings, articles and books of the now-deceased Anna Politkovskaya, including: A Dirty War (2001)[75], Vtoraia Chechenskiaia (2002)[76], and A Small Corner of Hell: Dispatches From Chechnya (2003),[77] P Khlebnikov and A. G. Rikhter's Zhurnalista I voina : osveshchenie rossiiskimi SMI voennykh deistvii v Chechne (1995),[78] and Carlotta Gall and Thomas de Waal's Chechnya: A Small Victorious War (1997)[79].

Also quite interesting along these lines is Nikolai Mamulashvili's recent book (2005): Moia Chechenskaia Voina.[80] This documentary book details his adventures as a journalist in Chechnya including a humorous (or at least as humorous as possible) account of his 94 days in captivity, held by Chechen fighters in part in a cellar in Chechnya.

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[71] Jack, Andrew, Inside Putin's Russia, Granta Books, London, 2004.
[72] Shevtsova, Lilia, Yeltsin's Russia : Myths and Reality, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC, 1999.
[73] Shevtsova, Lilia, Putin's Russia, second edition, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC, 2005.
[74] Truscott, Peter, Putin's Progress, Simon and Schuster, London and New York, 2004.
[75] Politkovskaya, Anna, A Dirty War: A Russian Reporter in Chechnya, Harvill Press, London, 2001.
[76] Politkovskaya, Anna, Vtoraia Chechenskaia, Zakharov, Moskva, 2002.
[77] Politkovskaya, Anna, A Small Corner of Hell: Dispatches From Chechnya, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2003.
[78] Khlebnikov, P. and A. G. Rikhter, Zhurnalista I voina : osveshchenie rossiiskimi SMI voennykh deistvii v Chechne, Rossiisko-amerikanskii informatsionnyi Press-centre, Moskva, 1995.
[79] Gall, Carlotta and Thomas de Waal, Chechnya: A Small Victorious War, Pan Original, London and Basingstoke, Hampshire, 1997.
[80] Mamulashvili, Nikolai, Moia Chechenskaia Voina, Vremia, Moskva, 2005.

These books, chapters and articles are written by those who have done extensive reportage on the political actors involved and on the Chechen region add a vital viewpoint to any understanding of what is Russian public opinion of the two Chechen wars.

External Influences on Russian Society and on the Russian Government

As Russia's role in the post-Soviet era has been one of direct and indirect intervention on the territories of the former Soviet Union where there has been a Russian interest, other world powers have sought to counsel against Russia's worst 'impulses' on these matters. Some writers like Matthew Evangelista have referred to Russia's engagement in conflicts in the former Soviet Union as being 'over-determined.'[81]

In response, some foreign governments have sought to admonish or punish Russia in some way for these military interventions, and to the consternation of the Russian government, this criticism has extended on some occasions to Russia's Chechen policy. As Sarah Mendelson points out in a paper for *Problems of Post-Communism*, 'Chechnya has become the site of some of the worst human rights abuses in Europe since World War II,' yet the response from the 'international community' has been muted.[82]

In some sections of this paper, Russian public opinion will be analysed in relation to how the public reflects on what attempts by foreign entities have been made to influence Russian governmental policy on the Chechen wars.

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[81] Evangelista, Matthew, 'Historical Legacies and the Politics of Intervention in the Former Soviet Union,' The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict, (ed.) Michael L. Brown, MIT Press, Cambridge MA and London, 1996, p. 121. (pp. 107-140)

[82] Mendelson, Sarah E., 'Anatomy of Ambivalence: The International Community and Human Rights Abuse in the North Caucasus,' *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 53, No. 6, Nov./Dec. 2006, p. 3. (pp. 3-15)

Russia's policy on initiating the second open Chechen war came under intense criticism from the European Union; the governments of the EU being under pressure from their own public opinions:

> 'The reputations of the EU leaders were to an extent challenged by public opinion because of probable protests if the catastrophe occurred and the EU had remained passive.'[83]

This criticism has often not extended to the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and both wars will be studied in this context. In his chapter on 'CIS Southern Belt; Regional Cooperation and Integration,' the Middle East academic on Islam and the CIS at the University of Aarhus, Mehdi Mozaffari, comments on the first war that:

> '[...]the multiple Russian interventions in Tajikistan and in the Caucasus illustrate very well the asymmetrical relations inside the CIS with respect to the security issues. The war in Chechnya is a good example that demonstrates the very cautious and highly prudential attitude of the CIS member states vis-à-vis Russia. The fact is that only Georgia of the CIS (the member most affected by the wars) had publicly criticized the Russian military intervention in Chechnya.'[84]

Margot Light particularly highlights the importance of the current understanding of foreign governments on Chechnya and the war there in the context of Russia's democracy in the Yeltsin era.

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[83] Lintonen, Raimo, 'Understanding EU Crisis Decision-Making: The Case of Chechnya and the Finnish Presidency,' *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, Vol. 1, No. 1, March 2004, p. 31.
[84] Mozaffari, Mehdi, 'Regional Cooperation and Integration,' Security Politics in the Commonwealth of Independent States, (ed.) Mehdi Mozaffari, Macmillan Press Ltd, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 1997, p.171.

'Whether or not these characteristics of Russia's political structures and culture have an effect on particular policies, they illustrate how democratization has diminished the coherence and predictability of Russian foreign policy. Moreover, by affecting the way in which Russian foreign policy is perceived, they influence the responses of other states to Russia and this, in turn, has an impact on the options available to Russian policy makers. But has democratization made Russian policy more peaceable or more war-prone?'[85]

This question, which Light depicts as 'difficult' is worth further attention in the context of this paper. In some ways, in the context of the two periods studied in this thesis, democratisation has made Russia more prone to the use of military means, if for no other reason than the fact that Russia no longer had the financial or diplomatic (the 'superpower') means to affect the situation otherwise. What however does this mean for Russian public opinion on the Chechen wars? This will mean that the Russian public, given democratisation, in fact can be more diligent to oppose foreign intervention in the affairs of Russia, even more so than in Soviet times, based on the perceived lack of status due to loss of empire (the 'underdog' perception).

One book by former American foreign service officer Yale Richmond is worth mentioning as an interesting addition to literature on the topic of Russian society and external influences. His book, last published in 2003, entitled From Nyet to Da[86] gives unique insight into the Russian mindset, as he has perceived it after years of service. Understanding Russian public opinion on the Chechen wars is as much of a study of when the Russian mind believes that force is appropriate as anything else, and books such as this add an increased level of insight into the situation.

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[85] Light, Margot, 'Democracy, Democratization, and Foreign Policy in Post-Soviet Russia,' *CEU Working Paper IRES No. 99/2*, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary, April 1999, p. 21.
[86] Richmond, Yale, From Nyet to Da, Intercultural Press, Inc., Yarmouth ME and London, 2003.

Altogether, given Russian tradition, attempts by foreign entities to effect change in Russian public opinion will be found to be profoundly unsuccessful. This element of discussion must be studied briefly in chapters two and four in order to create a greater understanding of what is Russian public opinion, why does it reject foreign influence, and how has it changed between the two wars in Chechnya.

Conclusions

These sources show the parallels of other literature to this thesis as concerning study of Russian public opinion in regard to the two wars in Chechnya. As appropriate, further reference to these texts will be necessary in answering the questions relevant to this thesis.

In the post-Soviet era, previous studies of Russian public opinion per se have found that understanding the social bases of public opinion and the role of the political elite (according to Matthew Wyman's work) have been unique subjects on which to examine the focus of this thesis. Further to this, previous studies have made brief or rudimentary assumptions about Russian public opinion on specifically the issue of the Chechen wars that this research seeks to investigate in detail. In the context of Rose, Mishler and Munro's research from their article and book, as to be discussed markedly in chapter five, this thesis examines what analysis of Russian public opinion on the wars in Chechnya says about the wider perspective of Russia's 'democracy.'

In summation, to highlight future chapters, academic knowledge of differences in Russian public opinion about the Chechen wars has not been fully explored in reference to Russia's attempted democratic system. Other academics have sought to study democracy in Russia through the use of some other issues, but less in relation to Chechnya, and so this thesis seeks to fill this relevant

gap in literature.

Jason Vaughn

Chapter Two

Trends of Russian Public Opinion within the Two Chechen Wars

Introduction

This chapter is written to discuss and map trends in Russian public opinion over time in each of the two post-Soviet era Russian wars in Chechnya, 1994 to 1996 and 1999 to 2003, and to attempt to connect this to a wider parallel political context.

Herein, this chapter will seek to examine as precisely as possible, given research accumulated for these purposes:

- The long-term trends concerning Russian policy in Chechnya of Russian public opinion during each of the two time periods of the Chechen war being examined.
- What these trends say about the wider political context of Russia.

Appropriate public opinion polling data taken from published primary sources will be used to document mass opinion trends generally covering the majority of the territory of the Russian Federation.[87] Although a few specific points will be made in regard to specific regions of Russia

[87] For polling data used, corresponding footnotes will detail the question used, number of respondents, dates, sources and detailed location data (if available). In regard to the margin of error, this chapter will accept the VTsIOM standard recognized in VTsIOM Press Reports as generally plus or minus 3.8% according to surveys taken of 1600 respondents in 83 population centres in 33 regions of the country. Corresponding to this, when acknowledging other surveys by VTsIOM, ROMIR, FOM and other sources, it will be generally recognized that, in the absence of information found dealing with the specifics of polling data beyond what is published, margin of error could be higher or lower in regard to respondents' size. If, for instance, 2300 respondents are polled nationwide in any given survey by ROMIR, then the margin of error would therefore be considered less. The opposite of course would be true for surveys with fewer respondents. There is necessarily an assumption of professionalism here in taking

within this chapter, a more detailed discussion about variations in public opinion dealing with the Chechen war issue on a regional and local basis will be saved for chapter three.

Methodologically, this chapter will separate discussion of the two wars in Chechnya (1994-96 and 1999-2002) into four parts.

Firstly, the beginning of the first war will be examined. Polling data will demonstrate that there was little support for Boris Yeltsin when he first ordered an invasion of Chechnya in late 1994. If Yeltsin sought to improve his political position by taking this course of action in Chechnya, then this decision was flawed.

Secondly, the course and conclusion of the first war will be discussed. Any existing support for the first war will be shown to abate quickly. Over the course of the next two years, until the end of the war and the negotiated settlement of the Khasavyurt Accords, what little public support existed will ebb, and to a degree examined in this paper, support for the Yeltsin administration will also degrade even more than previously. To what degree is the Chechen war connected to support for Yeltsin? What other factors might contribute or not to this erosion of support? If given that the failure of the war effort is arguably a reason for his low polling numbers, how does Yeltsin rise again to be re-elected to a second term as President?

Thirdly, the beginning of the second war in Chechnya will be discussed, centring on how Russian public opinion regarded a new beginning to hostilities in 1999. A number of incidents can be seen as priming the Russian people again for war, including apartment bombings in Russian cities and an actual Chechen invasion outside the borders of Chechnya. Given that these

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account of respondent class and location distribution as regarding agencies conducting general nationwide surveys used in this thesis, however all sources have a record of reliability in this area.
Also, again in the case of the minority of survey data collections of a regional basis used in this chapter, there is a limitation of application to mass Russian trends in opinion as will be acknowledged in each appropriate case.

events were blamed by the Yeltsin administration on Chechen lawlessness, whether as a real or perceived threat, to what degree did they prepare the Russian people for a second invasion?

Fourthly, Russian public support for the second war will be analyzed after initiation of a new invasion. It will be shown that, as opposed to the first war, there would be a greater level of support for the second Chechen war, perhaps reflecting a newly created sense of justification for the conflict in public opinion. Can this justification be understood in real terms? How can this renewed support for war be connected to policies of the Putin administration?

This chapter will primarily concern the connection of public opinion to perceptions of justification and of the presidential administrations' conducting offensive military policies in the Chechen region. Special emphasis will be placed at times on the status and perceptions of the economy as a comparative basis for analysis, and how this relates to support (or lack thereof) for the presidential administration at issue and the respective policies on Chechnya. Unlike in other chapters of this thesis, the author uses a linear approach in order to catalogue adequately developing trends in Russian public opinion.

1994 – The Beginning of War I

Russian society underwent a dramatic transformation between 1991 and 1994. Especially among activists in Moscow, in 1991, the fall of the Soviet regime created positive speculation about the future:

> 'Within three days, it [the Coup] was all over, defeated by the opposition of the Russian leadership, the heroism of the people who took to the streets unarmed against tanks, the

resistance in the Army, the media and the factories, and by the lack of resolution by the plotters themselves.'[88]

Furthermore:

'On the third day of resistance, when victory was already at hand, a chant of 'za sebia,' *for yourself*, erupted among the defenders of the White House because this moment was seen as much as a triumph for the individual Russian citizen as it was a political victory for Yeltsin and his allies.'[89]

Within three years, feelings among some Russians[90] of success at getting rid of the totalitarian Soviet government transformed into bewilderment about what their country, the Russian Federation, had become. Many complained that Yeltsin and his administration were responsible for Russia's instability in 1994. The first Chechen war became an example of this endemic culture of strife where the Russian government felt the requirement of using force as an option. Michael McFaul points to the necessity of Yeltsin's 1993 decision to use force against parliament, and thereby the continuation of violence as a possibility in Russian politics, as being representative of the lack of consensus in Russian public opinion over the course of change. It was true that:

'[...]although Yeltsin and his government had significant popular support, especially after the failed coup attempt of August 1991, their reform agenda represented their own preferences and not the desires of all elites or the will of the masses.'[91]

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[88] Sakwa, Richard, Russian Politics and Society, 3rd edition, Routledge, London, 2002, p. 15.
[89] McFaul, Michael, Russia's Unfinished Revolution, Cornell University Press, Ithaca NY and London, 2001, p. 124.
[90] The role of 'politically-active' Russians in relation to the general population will be discussed in chapter three.
[91] McFaul, Michael, Russia's Unfinished Revolution, p. 161.

Difficulties with adapting to the new capitalist system, policies of denationalization and privatization, the collapse of the Union and increasing crime and corruption all contributed to decline in the standard of living for ordinary Russian citizens. In 1991 alone, levels of real income and production fell by 17%. Output too fell by 40% in light industry. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for Russia would go on to fall by an overwhelming 50% by 1995.[92]

Despite gaining more Presidential powers, Boris Yeltsin's attempts at improving the lot of ordinary Russians proved fruitless. Gaining the temporary power to enact economic reforms by decree in October 1991, at the Fifth Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Republic, Yeltsin devoted his administration to short-term economic policies for restructuring, including programs for rapid economic liberalization.[93] This and the accompanying policies of privatization would do little except cause the economy to drift aimlessly, and give the Russian Parliament an opening to contest Yeltsin directly, leading to the next great constitutional crisis which Russian society had to endure, the late-1993 showdown between Yeltsin and the Russian Parliament.

VTsIOM polling data collected monthly between March 1993 and January 1994 show that, on average, the Russian public considered the economy negatively; with 60% (to sometimes over 70%) saying that the economic position of Russia was bad or very bad.[94]

Similarly, later continuing VTsIOM polling data between March 1993 and September 1994 revealed that at least 39% said that their family's 'material position' was bad or very bad, at least

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[92] Sakwa, Russian Politics and Society, pp. 233 – 236.

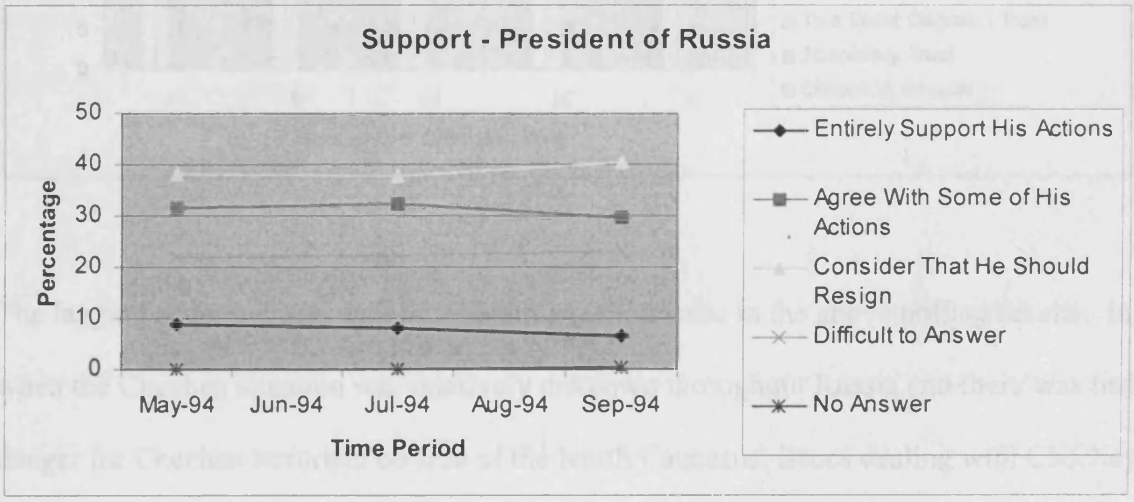
[93] For more information on this form of economic policy, see Sakwa, Russian Politics and Society, pp. 233 – 240. See also, Murrell, Peter, 'What is Shock Therapy? What Did it Do in Poland and Russia?,' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 1993, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 111-140 and Remington, Thomas F, 'From Soviets to Parliamentarians,' Developments in Russian Politics 4, (eds.) Stephen White, Alex Pravda and Zvi Gitelman, Macmillan Press, Ltd, London, 1997, pp. 65 – 67.

[94] Question: 'How do you presently rate the material position of your family?' Possible responses: 1) 'Very Good' 2) 'Good' 3) 'Medium' 4) 'Bad' 5) 'Very Bad' 6) Difficult to answer 7) no answer. Asked monthly of between 3918-4001 respondents, VTsIOM, Informatisionnyi bulletin, Aspect Press Ltd., Moskva, No. 2, Marta-Aprel' 1994, p. 52.

48% said that their town's economic position was bad or very bad, and at least 65% said that the economic position of Russian was bad or very bad.[95]

On this basis, Yeltsin's public support was demonstrably low even before Chechnya became a divisive subject in Russia. As President of Russia, from May to September of 1994, Boris Yeltsin's approval ratings trended downwards. Particularly those who 'entirely' supported the President's actions were decreasing steadily in relation to those who thought the President should resign. According to relevant VTsIOM data, this lag in support is apparent:

(Graph 1):[96]



Nevertheless, as seen from the graph if you combine those who completely support Yeltsin with those who agree with some of his actions, the percentages generally rival those calling for his resignation.

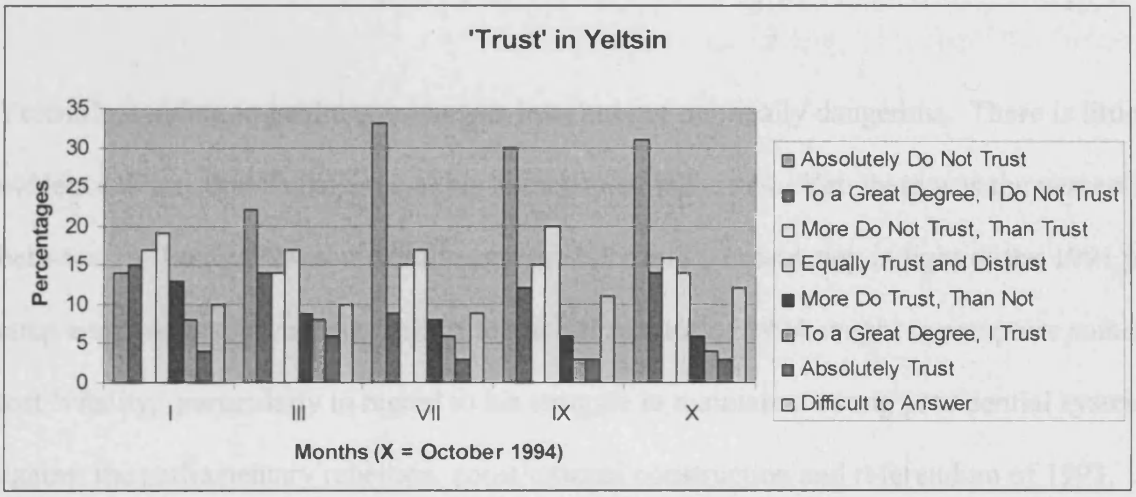
[95] Question: 'How do you presently rate the material position of your family?' Second question: 'How would you rate the economic position of Russia?' Possible responses as in footnote 7. VTsIOM, Informatisionnyi bulletin, Aspect Press Ltd., Moscow, No. 6, November-December 1994, p. 46.

[96] In answer to the question, 'What is your personal attitude to the President of Russia?' asked in May, June and September 1994 of respectively 2975, 2958 and 2959 general respondents. Possible answers as in Graph 1, see VTsIOM, VTsIOM Informatsionnyi bulletin, Aspect Press Ltd., No. 4, Moskva, Iuli'-Auguste 1994, p. 49. VTsIOM, VTsIOM Informatsionnyi bulletin, Aspect Press Ltd., No. 5, Moskva, Sentiabr'-Oktiabr 1994, p. 71. VTsIOM, VTsIOM Informatsionnyi bulletin, Aspect Press Ltd., No. 6, Moskva, Noiabr'-Dekabr' 1994, pp. 48-49.

Public Opinion Foundation data showing 'trust' in Yeltsin mirror VTsIOM data, as seen from the following graph:

(Graph 2):[97]

(*'I' is January 1994, 'III' is March 1994…)



The lagging economy was with little doubt a central issue in the above polling results. In an era when the Chechen situation was relatively unknown throughout Russia and there was little danger for Chechen terrorism outside of the North Caucasus, issues dealing with Chechnya were not a central focus at this time.

Additionally, according to other VTsIOM questions, by September of 1994, all politicians in Russia were generally getting low marks. In answer to a question asking for respondents to name five or six politicians in Russia they had trust in, Yeltsin came in tied in first place among named politicians with the consistent democrat Grigory Yavlinsky at 10%.[98] Highest overall

[97] Question: 'To what degree do you Trust Boris Yeltsin?' Possible answers as in Graph 2, Public Opinion Foundation, January 1994: 1064 respondents, March 1994: 114 respondents, July 1994: 1230 respondents, September 1994: 1010 respondents, October 1994: 688 respondents, http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/policy/president2/eltsin/rating_eltsin/of19943308.

[98] Question of 2959 general respondents: 'Please mention 5 or 6 Russian political figures in whom you have confidence.' Potential answers: 1) Ye. Gaidar, 2) B. Yeltsin, 3) V. Zhirinovsky, 4) G. Zyuganov, 5) A. Rutskoi, 6)

percentages went to, in sequence, 'Difficult to answer' (39%), 'No one' (22%), and 'Other' (13%).

Three months before Yeltsin ordered the war in Chechnya, relatively speaking, his position in public opinion seemed no better or worse than anyone else's. No other politician inspired significant public confidence, particularly given Yeltsin's role as the incumbent President.

Yeltsin's standing in public opinion was low, but not politically dangerous. There is little evidence of any direct challenge to his authority by late-1994. Yet, there was the perception that between 1991 and 1994, some of the energy of Yeltsin's Presidency in light of the 1991 post-coup euphoria had been lost. Yeltsin in the last months of 1994 sought to recapture some of this lost 'vitality,' particularly in regard to his struggle to maintain a strong presidential system against the parliamentary rebellion, constitutional construction and referendum of 1993.

On the question of Chechnya, that republic had been rebelling against Russia since the immediate post –coup era of October 1991. The issue of whether to maintain Chechnya as a constitutional member of the Russian Federation (and, if yes, then how to do this) became a point of contention in the Yeltsin administration. Also prominent is the issue of banditry in the region. Yeltsin in his memoirs, Midnight Diaries, contended this point: that Dudaev's government made no effort to fight corruption and in fact supported the criminal domain, and therefore the Russian invasion was justified.[99] Allegations have also been made that there were direct financial reasons for invasion, such as for oil or over weapon transfers. [100]

N. Travkin, 7) V. Chernomyrdin, 8) S. Shakhrai, 9) G. Yavlinsky, 10) Other, 11) No one, 12) Hard to answer, 13) No answer. VTsIOM, VTsIOM Informatsionnyi bulletin, Aspect Press Ltd., No. 6, Moskva, Noiabr'-Dekabr' 1994, p. 50.

[99] Yeltsin, Boris, Midnight Diaries, Phoenix Publishing, London, 2000, p. 55.

[100] Dunlop, John B., Russia Confronts Chechnya, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, p. 132.

In the context of the post-Soviet era, Chechnya, or the issue of Chechens in Russian society, had not been a point of significance in Russian society. Before the Russian invasion of 1994, few sources found that Russian public opinion considered the situation in Chechnya to be of paramount importance, although there was remaining the longstanding stereotype of Chechens as 'criminals.'

VTsIOM polling data published in January 1994 (surveys conducted October 1993) revealed that Chechens had the highest negative to positive responses (48%: 35%) in regard to 'relations.'[101] Despite the fact that, as pointed out by John B. Dunlop analyzing another VTsIOM survey conducted in late-1992, 'only 31 percent (of Russians) had ever encountered a Chechen,'[102] that particular ethnic group produced a larger amount of negative feeling among the Russian public than any other group.

In relation to the possibility of conflict, the Russian public was decidedly opposed. In a summer survey of the Russian (non-Caucasian) public, 40% of respondents thought that Russia should not take a position on the Chechnya matter until the Chechens had worked out their own internal problems. If Chechnya so desired, 23% believed that it should be allowed to leave the Russian Federation. Only 5% believed that Russian should have a military role in the Chechen area.[103] This would change little over the following six months. Just before open invasion, 59% of respondents in a VTsIOM poll again said that they were in favour of either a peaceful solution to the conflict or desired a quick exit of Russian troops from the situation.[104]

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[101] Data taken from table: VTsIOM, Informatisionnyi bulletin, Aspect Press Ltd., Moskva, No. 1, Ianvaria 1994, pp. 18.

[102] Dunlop, John B, 'Russia: In Search of an Identity,' New States, New Politics, (eds.) Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, p. 61.

[103] *Ibid*, p. 62.

[104] Question: 'What is to be done? (in reference to a previous question regarding who is to blame for the war)' VTsIOM, Poll conducted 16-19 December 1994, 1,600 respondents, Data collected from: Levada, Yuri, 'Narod i voina: bol'shinstvo protiv, ' *Izvestiia*, No. 246 (24353), 23 Dekabr 1994, pp. 1-2.

However, perhaps taking note of the mere 'regard' of the Russian societal view for Chechens in view of the then-current situation, in December 1994 Boris Yeltsin and his administration decided to order the Russian military to mount a full scale invasion of Chechnya. Russian public opinion must be analyzed in this section parallel to study of this initial operation.

In response to the invasion, the Russian public was quite unenthusiastic. A Russia-wide survey conducted after the invasion by the Public Opinion Foundation explains the mood persuasively. 1,270 respondents, sampled from rural and urban Russian populations, were asked what their opinion was of the necessity of Russia's armies to enter in Chechnya. 65% said that they disagreed with the use of force. 19% were in support, and 16% gave the 'hard to answer' choice.[105] In a parallel survey, exactly on the point of the introduction of Russian troops in Chechnya, 63% viewed this negatively, 23% positively.[106]

Conjecture was rampant also as to the motive for invasion, given that Yeltsin had not yet explained his reasons yet (this would not take place until 16 days after the beginning of the conflict). A second question asked why people thought Yeltsin ordered the invasion of Chechnya. 33% speculated that it was to hold Russia together. 30% thought it was meant to restore some type of abstract order.[107]

Another question asked Russians what the consequences would be of the military campaign. In this regard, public opinion necessarily did not equate the Chechen war with being a threat to democracy. Polls by Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) confirmed this, with only 19%

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[105] Question: 'Do you believe it is necessary for Russia to send armies into Chechnya?' Public Opinion Foundation, Dec. 1994, 1270 respondents, http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/projects/finfo/finfo1994/of1994_38/of19943801.

[106] Question: 'How do you regard the introduction of Russian troops in Chechnya?' Public Opinion Foundation, Possible answers: 1) Positively 2) Negatively 3) Difficult to answer, 24 Dekabr 1994, 1366 respondents, http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/societas/Chechnya/truck_war/of19943913.

[107] Question: 'In your opinion, what was behind the decision of the President to send troops in Chachnya?' Public Opinion Foundation, 1,367 respondents, Data collected from: Alyonnik, Lev, 'Vvod voisk v Chechniu snizil reiting presidenta El'tsina,' *Segodnia*, No. 247 (354), 27 Dekabr 1994, p. 2.

connecting the conflict in Chechnya with a large possibility of the end of democracy in Russia.[108]

As for the future of the conflict, Russian public opinion was not positive. In another FOM survey, 63% answered that they thought that the Chechen war would start a 'protracted war with the people of the North Caucasus.' Only 22% opposed this understanding of the conflict.[109] This is a statement of the fear within Russian public opinion that, as was to be the case, Russia might be drawn into a continuing war in the region.

Additional data by Public Opinion Foundation continued to show this doubt. Polling data showed that Russians maintained their initial disapproval of the war in Chechnya after the one and a half month point, with the majority (52%) saying that they did not approve of the war in Chechnya from the very beginning.[110]

As for Yeltsin's personal polling numbers, the beginning of the war was definitively not good. Focusing strictly on the beginning of invasion, a weekly polling segment of the survey asked Russians how much they trusted their President. 61% responded that they distrusted Yeltsin on 10 December. The same question asked a week later on 17 December found that the level of

[108] Question: 'How do you think, does the military conflict in Chechnya mean the end of Democracy in Russia?' December 1994, 1367 respondents. See Mindsova, Svetlana and Elena Petrenko, 'Every Fourth Links the Military Conflict in Chechnya With the End of Democracy in Russia, and Every Second Does Not Agree,' Public Opinion Foundation, 23 December 1994, http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/societas/Chechnya/truck_war/of19943909.

[109] Question: 'Are you afraid that the military actions of the Russian army in Chechnya can turn into a long war for Russian in the Northern Caucasus?' Possible answers: 1) Yes (63%) 2) No (22%) 3) Difficult to answer (15%), Public Opinion Foundation, December 1995, 1367 respondents. http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/societas/Chechnya/truck_war/of19943910.

[110] Question: 'Today, one and a half months later, has your attitude towards the decision of the leadership of Russia changed about the beginning of military actions in Chechnya?' Possible answers and responses: 1) No, it has not changed, from the very beginning I understood the necessity of this decision (52%) 2) No, it has not changed, from the very beginning I understood the inaccuracy of this decision (15%) 3) Yes, it has changed, I now understood the necessity of this decision (6%) 4) Yes, it has changed, I now see the inaccuracy of this decision (11%) 5) Difficult to answer (15%), Public Opinion Foundation, January 1995, 1353 respondents. http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/societas/Chechnya/truck_war/of19950302.

distrust rose distinctly, by 6% to 67%. The 'trust' answer during that same weeks time, fell by 3% despite being at a low level in the beginning anyway.[111]

Polls taken by VTsIOM in early December demonstrated similar results. Whereas a similar poll in August 1994 gave Yeltsin the lowest ratings at 49%, his negative ratings (those who rated Yeltsin at 1-3 out of a possible 10) in December rose to 54%.[112]

Likewise, there were protests taking place in Moscow. On 'Starii ploshad' in Moscow, the group 'Memorial' protested on 26 December and attracted the attention of the police, who arrested a number of well-known dissidents, including Aleksandr Lavut, Arsenii Roginskii, Aleksandr Podrabinek, Susanna Pechuro, Gennadii Molchanov and others.[113]

Available evidence shows that the build-up to, and initiation of, the Chechen war did nothing to improve Yeltsin's position in Russian public opinion and much to hinder. The Russian people were far from convinced that the war was justified, at least in the context of Yeltsin's portrayal of the war, which will be covered in future sections and chapters.

Early 1995 – June 1996: the Evolution of War I

This section will discuss trends of Russian public opinion from January 1995 when Grozny was taken (and thereby the beginning of Russia's static military occupation of Chechnya) until the end of the war in July 1996.

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[111] Question: 'To what degree do you trust Boris Yeltsin?' Potential answers as in Graph 2. Public Opinion Foundation, 10 December 1994:1367 respondents, 17 December 1994:1311 respondents. http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/policy/president2/eltsin/otsenki_i_oshibki/of19943912.

[112] Question: 'What rating between 1 and 10 would you give to Boris Yeltsin?' Possible answers between 1 and 10, with 10 being the highest. For this examination, ratings 1 to 3 will be consider negative, 4 – 7 will be medium, and 8 – 10 will be considered positive ratings. http://sofist.socpol.ru/lin_que.shtml?B=Display+frequencies&NQ=5714&sch_xml=5&en=1.

[113] Alyonnik, Lev, '<<Memorial>> vystabil <<vakhtu>> na Staroi ploshadi,' *Segodnia*, No. 247 (354), 27 Dekabr 1994, p.2.

A new round of polls came out in the days surrounding the taking of Grozny by the Russian army. The first 1995 All-Russia surveys conducted by the Public Opinion Foundation show how the Russian people regarded the issue of whether Russian troops should be in Chechnya or not. The first of these polls asked in a survey of 1,341 respondents what their attitude was in relation to the sending of Russian troops to Chechnya. 66% gave a negative response, while 21% were positive and 13% said it was 'hard to say.'

This is an increase in negative responses by a few percentage points from a similar December 1994 poll. Coinciding with this, positive responses were down, and the 'hard to say' answer was about the same.[114] Another question in the same survey asked how their opinion of Yeltsin would change depending on what policy move he did next. 37% replied that, if he opened peace talks immediately, then their opinion of him would change for the better. 41% said that their attitude towards him would not change at all.[115] To a degree, the war in Chechnya will be shown to simply reinforce a negative image of Yeltsin in Russian public opinion.

A majority, 66%, regarded the introduction of the Russian army to Chechnya negatively.[116] Another relevant question asked what Russians generally thought of the Russian Army's actions in Chechnya and, in response, a majority (52%) condemned such actions.[117] 78% said the

[114] Question: 'How do you regard the entrance of Russian troops in Chechnya?' Possible answers: 1) Positively 2) Negatively 3) Difficult to answer, Public Opinion Foundation, January 1995, 1341 respondents. http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/projects/finfo/finfo1995/of1995_01/of19950109.

[115] Question: 'Would your attitude towards Boris Yeltsin change if he went on peace talks with the Chechen leadership?' Possible answers: 1) No, it would not change, 2) Yes, it would become better, 3) Yes, it would become worse, 4) Difficult to answer. Public Opinion Foundation, January 1995, 1341 respondents. http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/projects/finfo/finfo1995/of1995_01/of19950114.

[116] Question: 'How do you regard the introduction of the Russian Army to Chechnya?' Possible answers: 1(Positively 2) Negatively 3) Difficult to answer. Public Opinion Foundation, January 1995, 1341 respondents. http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/projects/finfo/finfo1995/of1995_01/of19950109.

[117] Question: 'How do you judge the activities of the Russian Army in Chechnya? Possible answers: 1) I condemn them 2) I approve of them 3) I am indifferent 4) Difficult to answer. Public Opinion Foundation, January 1995, 1341 respondents. http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/projects/finfo/finfo1995/of1995_01/of19950110.

Chechen war was a tragedy for all of Russia.[118] Interestingly, in answer to a question asking about why troops were introduced to Chechnya, only military personnel answered, 'for the interests of bosses in Russia.' Other groups answered that they were opposed because they 'condemned all war.'[119] Although other surveys have not been found to confirm this, perhaps particularly military personnel felt they were fighting for elite interests in the Russian government even more so than the (directly) uninvolved overall population.

A survey conducted from the 7th to the 10th of January by VTsIOM exposed again that Yeltsin's disapproval rating had dropped significantly since September 1994 when it was 70%, now in this case to 81%. In the same poll, 69% thought that Russia was going nowhere by carrying out the war, up from 53% in September 1994 (at that time, it was just the threat of war).[120]

Luckily for Yeltsin, however, his political opponents could muster little better public support. Another poll conducted by *Komsomol'skaia Pravda* (however only in Moscow) found that, although 63% of Moscovites disapproved of Yeltsin, only vague possible future challengers such as Sergei Kovalev (28% approval: 21% disapproval) had a higher 'approval' rating versus disapproval rating on the issue.[121]

Studies in late-January would show that even Yeltsin's optimism in retaking Grozny, which coincided with these surveys, had little effect on the Russian public's view of the war. Public

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[118] Question: 'How do you consider the events in Chechnya, a tragedy for only Chechnya or for all of Russia?' Possible answers: 1) I don't consider it a tragedy, 2) It is a tragedy for only Chechnya, 3) It is a tragedy for all Russia, 4) Difficult to answer. Public Opinion Foundation, January 1995, 1341 respondents. http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/projects/finfo/finfo1995/of1995_01/of19950113.

[119] Question: If you condemn the actions of the Russian army in Chechnya, then why?' Answers vary. Public Opinion Foundation, January 1995, 1341 respondents. http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/projects/finfo/finfo1995/of1995_01/of19950111.

[120] Question: 'What do you think, are affairs of Russia moving in the right direction, or does it seem to you that events are taking us 'the wrong way,' 'down a blind alley?' Second question: 'Do you approve or disapprove of the way Boris Yeltsin is coping with his duties as President of Russia?' VTsIOM, 1,597 respondents, '81% gorozhan schitaet, chto Boris El'tsin ne spravliaetsa obiazannostiami,' *Segodnia*, 17 January 1995, p. 2.

[121] Question: 'How has the Chechen crisis affected politicians' approval ratings?' Komsomol'skaia Pravda Sociological Survey, 18 January 1995, 1,000 respondents, Data collected from: 'Sobitiia v Chechnie: vashi otsenki?' *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 18 January 1995, pp. 1-2.

Opinion Foundation would do yet another survey in this period focusing on the effects of the Yeltsin and Chechen propaganda efforts. Interestingly also, this survey also focused on one of the core principles that supported the Russian invasion. In this poll, 47% of those surveyed said that they agreed with Yeltsin in that the Russian army was fighting 'bandit formations' (a term which would become one of the most typical references during the war and even up until the present day). Against this only 21% agreed with the opinions of Dudaev and the Chechen leadership, in their proclamations that the Russian army was committing genocide.[122]

Given that available Russian polling data were nevertheless against the war in this time period, this tells us that 'bandit formations' were not yet considered the threat to national security that they would later become in the second war. From this analysis, 47% agreed with Yeltsin as to the focus of the war effort but high majorities still opposed the war

To reinforce this point, in comparable polling data taken on 20 January 1995, 71% said that they opposed the use of Russian troops in Chechnya. Also in this survey, 74% said that it was 'unfair' to put on trial service people who refused to go to Chechnya and fight.[123]

In a survey referred to by Valery Tishkov in his book, Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Conflict In and After the Soviet Union, respondents answered a question as to whether Boris Yeltsin should be ousted because of events in Chechnya. In these results, 58% answered either 'Yes' or 'Probably Yes.'[124] As Tishkov noted, the Russian people, particularly because of the issue of

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[122] Question: 'Among others, there are two points-of view on understanding with who the Russian Army is at war in Chechnya. With which one do you agree?' Possible answers and percentage responses: 1) Bandit formations (47%), 2) the Chechen people (21%) 3) None of them (10%), 4) Difficult to answer (22%), Public Opinion Foundation, 27.01.1995, http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/projects/finfo/finfo1995/of1995_03/of19950304.

[123] Question: 'What is your attitude toward the sending of Russian troops into Chechnya?' Possible answers: 1) Positive 2) Negative 3) Hard to say. Second Question: 'Do you believe it is fair to put on trial servicemen who refuse to participate in military operations in Chechnya?' Possible answers: 1) Yes 2) No 3) Hard to say. Public Opinion Foundation, 20 January 1995, 1353 respondents. Data taken from: 'Bolshinstvo rossiian protiv suda nad voennimi-otkzaznikami' *Segodnia*, No.17 (375), 28 January 1995, p. 3.

[124] Tishkov, Valery, Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Conflict In and After the Soviet Union, SAGE Publishers, London, 1997, p. 223.

directly drafting young Russians to fight, were quickly tiring of the war and perhaps even linking the campaign in terms of success to the people who ordered the operation.

From January to May 1995, Russian public opinion would change little within this period, except for the continuing decline in Yeltsin's approval ratings. A number of polls would indicate this drop in support. In late February, in a survey conducted by VTsIOM, 48% thought that Yeltsin deserved no confidence at all. 56% thought he should resign.[125]

Comparable with surveys done before the war, 55% said that force should not be used to stop 'autonomous entities' from seceding from the Russian Federation, while 28% said the opposite. 57% thought that Yeltsin should resign immediately, and 68% believed he should not run again. However, very few Russians blamed his advisors for the war: only 8% thought that Russian Minister of Defense Pavel Grachev and Federal Security Minister Sergei Stepashin were responsible for the war, while 57% thought that Yeltsin bore sole responsibility for initiation of the campaign.[126]

Perceptions in Russian public opinion focus on the President. Over the course of this thesis, this is a recurring theme. Competence is gauged largely according to the leader at the top. At the same time, Yeltsin's comparative freedom to conduct policy in the North Caucasus and elsewhere meant that he took responsibility in the public eye. Yeltsin, as the head of the Russian state, could in many ways conduct policy as he wanted to, and so in Russian public opinion, he

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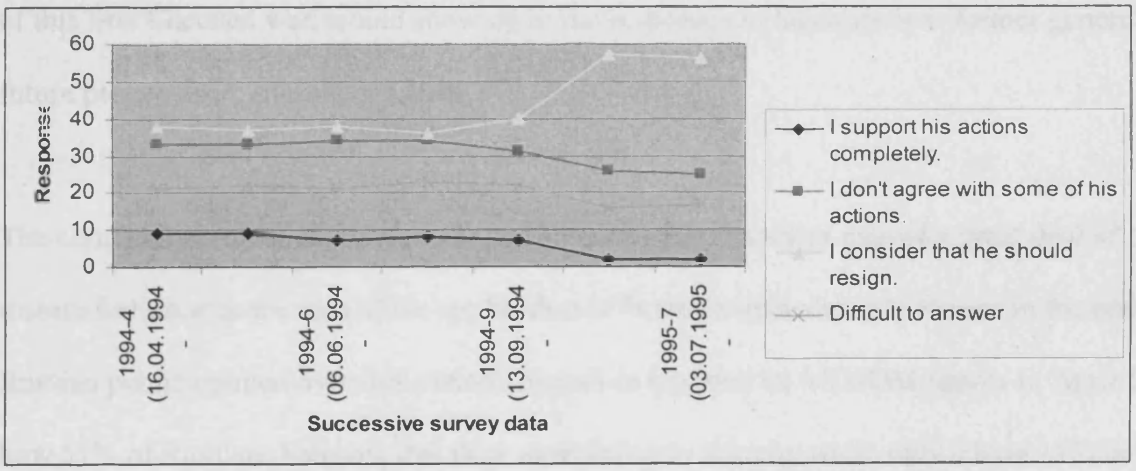
[125] Question concerning confidence in the President. Possible answers: 1) He deserves full confidence 2) He does not fully deserve confidence 3) He does not deserve confidence at all. Second question: 'Question concerning support for the President's actions. Possible answers: 1) Fully support his actions 2) Disagree with some of his actions 3) Believe he should resign 4) Hard to say. Data taken from: Sedov, Leonid- VTsIOM, 'Boris El'tsin pal zhertvoi Borisa El'tsina,' *Segodnia*, No. 62 (423), 8 April 1995, p. 3.

[126] Question: 'Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Russia should use force to prevent autonomous entities from seceding from the Russian Federation.' Possible answers: 1) Agree 2) Disagree. Second question: 'In your opinion, who bears the main responsibility for the decision to send troops to Chechnya?' Possible answers: 1) President Yeltsin 2) power wielding ministers (Pavel Grachev, Sergei Stepashin, Victor Yerin) 3) Yeltsin's advisors 4) ministers for nationality affairs 5) Russian Army generals. VTsIOM, published 23 February 1995, 1500 – 1800 Russian urban respondents. Data taken from: Gudkov, Lev, 'Vlast' i chechenskaia voina v obshestvennom mnenii Rossii,' VTsIOM, *Segodnia*, No.23 (392), 23 February 1995, p. 3.

was solely and completely responsible for any problems or failures that resulted from those policies.

In the context of long-term polling data, as further shown from other surveys conducted by VTsIOM for their *Monitoring of Economic and Social Changes* series, trends illustrate that Yeltsin was regarded increasingly negatively as President of Russia. This is as shown by the following graph:

(Graph 3):[127]



As seen above, especially notable is, outside of the beginning of the war in Chechnya given the events of the time period, it is difficult to find any other reason to account for the spike in people demanding Yeltsin's resignation between October 1994 and March 1995 surveys.

Also useful to note, the belief that Chechnya was a part of Russia continued to be low. In polls not published until mid-July, April polling reflected that 74% thought that Chechnya should not be forced to remain a part of Russia. The understood reason for war was still quite divided, also.

[127] Question: 'How do you regard the President of Russia?' Possible answers as in Graph 3, Monitoring Economic and Social Changes in Russia 1994-4, 1994-5, 1994-6, 1994-7, 1994-9, 1995-3, 1995-7. Respondents: 1481, 1492, 1481, 1476, 1482, 986 respectively. http://sofist.socpol.ru/.

39% thought that the reason for the war was to 'conceal illegal business.' Only just over a quarter, 26% responded that the purpose was to 'preserve Russian unity.'

In another survey conducted by Public Opinion Foundation in March 1995, Russian public opinion was for the first time also finally searching around for other people to support for the Russian Presidency. Grigory Yavlinsky, leader of the Yabloko (Apple) Party came in first in answer to the question of what Russian politician should be the next President, while Boris Yeltsin only managed a relatively weak fourth position, given his low approval ratings. Also for the first time, a future major player in Russian politics, particularly in the period close to the end of this first Chechen war, would show up in the responses to this question: former general and future peacemaker, Aleksandr Lebed.[128]

The combination of an unpopular war and an unpopular President caused a great deal of dissatisfaction with the idea of the application of Western democracy to Russia in the realm of Russian public opinion over this period. *Segodnia* reported on VTsIOM results in April 1995 on how 51% of Russians believed that they were living in anarchy while only a bare 11% believed that they were living in a developing democracy. According to this survey, 9% believed a dictatorship was being established.[129]

Interestingly, as would later be the case in the Putin era, public opinion did not necessarily equate Yeltsin's use of the military in Chechnya to the re-institution of a strong state. When

[128] Question: 'Which of the politicians listed below would you like to see as Russia's next President?' Possible answers: 1) Ye. Gaidar (all percentages from March 1995: 1) E. Gaidar (3%), 2) B. Yeltsin (3%), 3) V. Zhirinovsky (6%), 4) G. Zyuganov (5%), 5) S. Kovalyov (1%), 6) A. Lebed (6%), 7) A. Rutskoi (4%), 8) I. Rybkin (1%), 9) A. Solzhenitsyn (4%), 10) B. Fyodorov (5%), 11) V. Chernomyrdin (2%), 12) V. Shumeiko (1%), 13) G. Yavlinsky (11%), 14) None of them (21%), 15) Hard to say (15%), 16) I'm not going to vote (12%), March 1995, 1388 respondents. Data taken from: Chubukov, Dmitri, 'Khoroshii prezident – novyi prezident,' *Obshchaia gazeta*, No. 14 (90), 6 – 12 April 1995, p. 1.

[129] Question concerning public opinion's assessment of the political situation, Possible answers: 1) A dictatorship is being established 2) The old order is being preserved, with new labels attached 3) Democracy is developing 4) There is a loss of order 5) Other 6) Hard to say, VTsIOM, 1600 urban respondents. Data taken from: Levada, Yuri, 'V Rossii ustanovilas' <Demokratiia besporiadka>,' *Segodnia*, No.70 (428), 15 April 1995, p. 3.

considering the next polls, but also looking at previous anti-war polling data, it was a consistent characteristic of Russian public opinion during the first war that an overtly *peaceful*, however strong, state was desired. Yeltsin on the issue of Chechnya was consistently regarded to be in terms of his 'warmongering' policies.

This is as opposed to the broader more actively strength-based 'strong state' as the Russian government would pursue in the future and public opinion then would begin to acknowledge in a specifically positive light. As is to be seen, Russian public opinion will rarely consider Putin to be outside the bounds of society when he orders a second invasion of the Chechen region in 1999 in the same way that Yeltsin was considered isolated from public opinion.

A poll conducted by Public Opinion Foundation at this time has an element of this point-of-view on the state of politics in Russia around April of 1995. 43% of Russians in this survey wanted their children to live under a socialist system, 20% wanted them to live in a capitalist state, and 16% did not know or did not care what kind of system their children lived under.[130]

The first five months of war in Chechnya overall proved to be the least successful time for the Yeltsin Presidency during his nine years in office. Although his approval ratings would go down more, as will be explained, it was his actions during this period that would scar not only himself and his Presidency, but it would define the image of democracy in Russia for many years to come.

The first war in Chechnya came to an apogee in the summer of 1995. Largely due to overwhelming numerical superiority, as Charlotta Gall and Thomas De Waal discuss in their

[130] Question: 'Under what system would you like your children to live under?' Possible answers: 1) according to a socialist system 2) According to a capitalist system 3) To me, it does not matter 4) Difficult to answer, Public Opinion Foundation, 21.04.1995, 1370 respondents, http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/projects/finfo/finfo1995/of1995_15/of19951502.

Chechnya: A Small, Victorious War book, the Chechens were now seriously outgunned and lacking in medical supplies and ammunition. [131] The stage was set for the Budyonnovsk crisis at this point, which was the first serious venture of the Chechens outside of the recognized borders of Chechnya.

On 14 June 1995, Shamil Basaev led a small group of his men into Stavropol krai in order to take the war into Russia. Eventually deciding to make his stand in a hospital in the small town of Budyonnovsk, Basaev took an estimated 1600 hostages (with 150 children). After a few days, a long standoff with the MVD and FSB, and after a failed police/special forces raid, Prime Minister Chernomyrdin had to finally resolve the situation himself on the telephone with Basaev. This prompted a beginning of the end of the standoff on 19 June 1995, with Basaev and his men being allowed to return to Chechnya (with 120 living hostages to guarantee safety), and therefore being allowed to get away.[132]

Although the Budyonnovsk crisis was a setback for Russia's policy of conflict containment, a worried Russian public opinion was largely happy that the event was over. Anything that could be successfully resolved, at this point in time, seemed to be quite popular in public opinion, even if the results were not positive for Russia. Again and again, as to be discussed in detail on this issue, the status quo in Russian public opinion will be seen to be superior to any rapid changes that might affect society.

A survey by the Public Opinion Foundation demonstrated that Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin received a substantial public boost from this situation, having had a part in

[131] Gall, Charlotta and Thomas De Waal, Chechnya: A Small Victorious War, p. 253.
[132] A more precise timeline available here: 'Budyonnovsk,' http://www.agentura.ru/timeline/1995/basaev/.

negotiating Russia out of the crisis, with 56% giving him positive marks and 21% negative, in comparison to 14%: 60% for Yeltsin.[133]

Popular opinion as to who was actually responsible for the attack was relatively divided. 49% blamed the Yeltsin administration; 32% blamed the Chechen leadership. On Stepashin's command skills, 72% gave a negative response, while 9% said there was justification for his (and the tactical leadership's) order to storm the hospital.[134]

The Budyonnovsk event in some ways changed the fundamental tone of the entire campaign in Chechnya. The immediate effect of the raid was to shock the Yeltsin administration into trying to end the war at any cost; no doubt partly because of fear of public opinion should raids like Budyonnovsk become commonplace.

Whereas the Russian administration had previously been pushing the Russian Army to drive for a quick victory, now Russia started to attempt to find a peaceful settlement. An armistice was negotiated, and Russia tried to arrange for new elections in the rebel republic. At the same time, the war continued intermittently while the elections were being set up. This volatile environment was far too chaotic for an election to take place, and soon the 'armistice' was broken, causing outright fighting to start again.

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[133] Respondents answered two questions:
1) 'How do you rate actions of the chairman of the Russian government V. Chernomyrdin in regard to the tragic situation in Budyonnovsk?'
2) 'How do you rate actions of the President of Russia B. Yeltsin in regard to the tragic situation in Budyonnovsk?'
Possible answers: 1) Positively 2) Negatively 3) I know nothing about their activities 4) Difficult to answer, Public Opinion Foundation, 30.06.1995, 1368 respondents.
http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/projects/finfo/finfo1995/of1995_25/of19952505.

[134] *Ibid.*

All of the events in Chechnya ran parallel in this period with the new Russian Parliamentary elections of December 1995. Yeltsin's supporters did not do well in this election, with the Communists gaining first place.

Success at Budyonnovsk for the Chechen rebels, combined with the Yeltsin administration's willingness to negotiate, indeed invited further attempts to bring the war on Russian soil.[135] Chechen rebels seeking to find weaknesses to exploit in damaging the Russian government's will to continue the war saw how that could be accomplished. Time was on the side of the Chechen rebels also, in that the Yeltsin administration seems to have been extremely sensitive to public opinion, with a Presidential election coming in 1996.

July Russia-wide polls conducted by the Public Opinion Foundation showed that Aleksandr Lebed was making some of his first strong showings when Russians were asked who should be the next President. Lebed came in first place for the Presidency (9%), with Yavlinsky and Zhirinovsky (7% each) giving him serious contention.[136] It was in this month when Russians began their period of showing particular interest in Lebed, although (as will be explained) this high opinion of him soon faltered, as much due to the poor judgment of Lebed himself as to Yeltsin's positioning.

Not atypically, from the month of August, many media centres began to speculate on a Lebed Presidency. Feeding off the high opinion of Lebed held by many in the Russian public, Russian media outlets frequently cast the Chechen war as the catalyst for bringing the former general to

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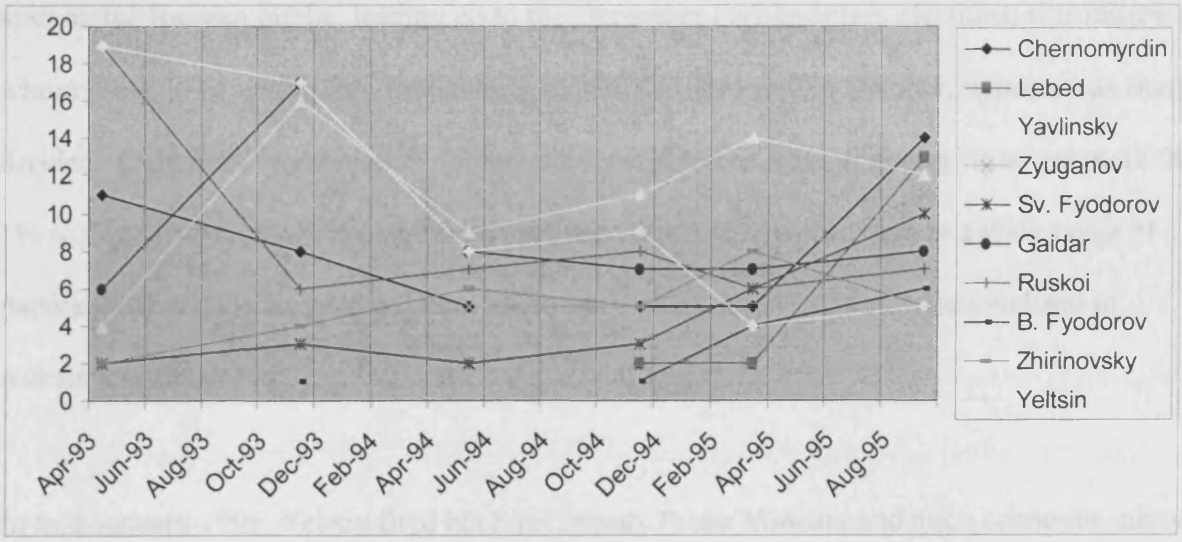
[135] Information gathered from Siren, Pontis and Ben Fowkes, Russia and Chechnya: The Permanent Crisis, Macmillan Press Ltd, Basingstoke, 1998, pp. 178 – 179.

[136] Question: 'If the election for President was held today, for which of the listed politicians would you vote?' Possible answers: 15 choices plus 16) Other 17) I still have not decided 18) None of them 19) Difficult to answer, Public Opinion Foundation, 14.07.1995, 1364 respondents. http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/projects/finfo/finfo1995/of1995_27/of19952701.

power.[137] In September, poll results of which the Russian public 'trusted' also lent to his credibility. That poll showed that only five people got double-digit 'trust' ratings, and Yeltsin was not one of them. Lebed, Chernomyrdin (still riding high after Budyonnovsk), Yavlinsky, Zyuganov, and Fedorov all had above ten percent in trustworthiness, with Yeltsin coming in at a paltry tenth place (5%). For Yeltsin, this was a one percent increase from a similar poll in March 1995. Clearly, these seven months had not been good for his Presidency. The following chart shows VTsIOM data published in data form by the cited article:[138]

(Graph 4):



Since he was a relatively unknown political 'commodity,' Lebed captured the Russian imagination, especially since he as yet had no obvious shortcomings. Before December 1994, despite his leadership in Moldova, Lebed remained a relatively unknown political actor and VTsIOM did not have his name yet on surveys. Here was a former general who seemed to know what he was talking about when he discussed Chechnya. Also, he seemed to represent, four years before Putin, a younger semi-politician who could bring a 'strong' hand to Russia.

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[137] Shevtsova, Lilia, 'Iz teni Kremlia,' *Segodnia*, No. 160 (518), 25 August 1995, p. 5.

[138] Question: 'Name the five or six political figures in Russia whom you trust the most.' Possible answers as in Graph 4, VTsIOM, 10 September – 1 October 1995, 2392 respondents (against similar number of respondents in previous polling), Data taken from: Savelev, Oleg-VTsIOM, 'Chetvertaia chast' rossiiskikh izbiratelei ne doveriaet nikomu iz politikov,' *Segodnia*, No. 199 (557), 19 October 1995, p. 3.

Also useful to note is the perceived comparative physical weakness of Yeltsin in this era. Yeltsin again had heart problems on 26 October 1995, forcing him into hospital again, as he had at various times in the past.[139] Worth noticing is the fact that, according to VTsIOM, only 35% were upset at this development, and 46% of those who were upset were only upset because 'any human suffering upsets me.' Only 7% of those who were upset believed that they should be upset because Yeltsin was a 'guarantor of reforms.'[140]

As with previous polling data, and reflecting the number of parties in the 1995 Russian political system, the Russian public, leading up to the December Parliamentary elections, was unsure as to whom it would be voting for. Particularly in one VTsIOM poll in October, opinion was sharply divided. Only the Communists, Yabloko and 'Our Home is Russia' managing to get more than 5% in this survey, 13%, 7% and 7% respectively, with other votes going to a wide range of parties all across the Russian political spectrum.[141] Opposition was still factionalized to Yeltsin's benefit.

In mid-January 1996, Yeltsin fired his First Deputy Prime Minister and main economic advisor, Anatoli Chubais, 'who was blamed for all the unrealized promises of the government and of the president himself.'[142] One of the crosses that Chubais was supposedly meant to bear was the sagging economy. Also, since confidence among the Russian public was negative in regard to perceived progress on economic issues (according to a VTsIOM survey at the time, only 12% thought that their own families were in a better financial position while 84% thought their

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[139] Korotchenko, Igor, 'Bolezn' prezidenta,' *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, No. 198 (1035), 27 October 1995, p. 1.
[140] Question: 'Were you upset at the news of Yeltsin's illness? Why?' Extensive list of possible responses, VTsIOM, 28-30 October 1995, 1000 Moscow residents. Data taken from: Savelev, O.-VTsIOM, 'Moskvichi o bolezni El'tsina,' *Moskovskii komsomolets*, No. 209 (17221), 1 November 1995, p. 1.
[141] Question: 'Should the elections to the State Duma be held next Sunday, which of the following parties, blocs would you vote for?,' VCIOM Express 1995-15, 19.10.1995 - 25.10.1995, 1541 respondents. http://sofist.socpol.ru/oprview.shtml?en=1.
[142] Shevtsova, Lilia, Yeltsin's Russia, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC,1999, p. 159.

financial situation was about the same or getting worse)[143], Chubais inspired little reaction in the public domain. This fact, along with a range of other real and imagined issues, caused the downfall of Chubais who was in fact one of the more progressive of Yeltsin's remaining non-security-related advisors.

On 21 April 1996, a Russian missile that homed in on his car phone killed the by-this-time mythologized Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudaev. This rare show of Russian technological prowess dealt a severe blow to the Chechen leadership, despite the fact that they committed Dudaev's memory to martyrdom. In Dudaev's place, his Vice-President, Zelimkhan Yanderbiev, took over as acting President. For the Russian side, given Dudaev's history with Yeltsin, it was easier to negotiate with Yanderbiev than it was to deal with Dudaev given his headstrong nature.

Fear of Russian public opinion was one factor in the minds of Russia's political elite at the time of the 1996 Russian Presidential election and following the perceived sour results of the 1995 Parliamentary elections. If not Yeltsin, as befitting his aging support, Zyuganov seemed the second choice of the electorate. However, the election of a Communist for president was for many not a possible consideration.

A February 1996 VTsIOM poll asked what the Russian people expected most out of a President in which they were likely to vote for. Out of ten possible answers, an overwhelming 60% answered that ending the war in Chechnya should be the first priority of any elected Russian President. Keeping Russia on the reform path came in ninth place with 11%. Again in this

[143] Question: 'How would you assess you family's financial position?,' Also, 4% said 'difficult to answer' and 1% refused to answer, VCIOM Express 1996-1, 20.02.1996 - 25.01.1996, 1599 respondents. http://sofist.socpol.ru/xml_view.shtml?en=1&HQ=12077&SQ=221&HSQ=3

survey, as to whom the people would vote for, Yeltsin was generally far behind Zyuganov and sometimes behind even Zhirinovsky.[144]

There are a number of reasons for this increase by late-February. Yeltsin publicly got into the impending struggle for his re-election with the announcement of his candidacy on 15 February.[145] In line with this, Yeltsin also actually started campaigning, which marked a great difference from his long time spent in hospital beds. By 16 February, Yeltsin was in Chelyabinsk making a number of promises to the people of the Urals and calling Moscow a 'depraved Babylon.'[146] Whatever his connection to that order or wherever fault lay for Moscow being such a 'Babylon,' if it was indeed such a thing, Yeltsin nevertheless started pushing at this point to separate himself from the Moscow establishment. Once again, Yeltsin the populist asserted himself. The Chechen war was unpopular, and so peace must be made. Moscow was unpopular in the regions, and so he had to distance himself from the centre.

Henceforth, there were to be no more drunken and disorderly appearances by Yeltsin as there had been in the past. As for his main opposition, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) nominated the communist candidate, Gennadi Zyuganov, on the same day.[147]

A 'Davos Pact' negotiated in Switzerland by eight leading Russian oligarchs[148] led by Boris Berezovsky determined that a Yeltsin victory must be ensured. Fearing Zyuganov's courting by 'Western moneymen' also in Davos, these oligarchs agreed 'on the spot' that Zyuganov was an

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[144] Question: 'What do you expect from the President, who you could vote for?'
VCIOM Express 1996-3, 15.02.1996 - 20.02.1996, 1584 respondents.
http://sofist.socpol.ru/oprview.shtml?en=1
VCIOM Express 1996-4, 05.03.1996 - 13.03.1996, 1596 respondents.
http://sofist.socpol.ru/oprview.shtml?en=1

[145] Malkina, Tatiana, 'Boris El'tsin: start mezhdu blagimi namereniiami,' *Segodnia*, 16 Feb. 1996, EastView, http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=2000182.

[146] 'Boris El'tsin perehodit v nastuplenie,' *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, Issue 32, 17 Feb. 1996, EastView, http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=289022.

[147] Nerushimyi blok kommunista Ziuganov i bespartiinogo Tuleeva,' *Kommersant-daily*, No. 24, 16 Feb. 1996, p. 3.

[148] Boris Berezovsky , Vladimir Gusinsky, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Vladimir Potanin, Vladimir Vinogradov, Alexander Smolensky, and Mikhail Friedman-Pyotr Aven (Friedman-Aven). See Hoffman, The Oligarchs, p. 328.

improper choice for being President of Russia and was, in effect, only pretending to be a 'kinder gentler Communist.'[149]

Chubais, chosen to lead the Yeltsin re-election campaign by the Davos Pact members[150], put forward a strong campaign in a potentially hostile environment, given that only six months previous, according to a VTsIOM poll, Yeltsin had a 5% approval rating. Using advice from US electoral campaigners, including the well-known Bill Clinton political planner Dick Morris[151], his re-election team put a lot of effort into demonising the Communist candidate, Zyuganov, and let it be known that supposedly a vote for the Communist was a vote for a return to Stalinist times. Apparently, Russian public opinion was not so willing to sympathize with the 'socialist period' as it supported in some polls.

Also to be discussed in more detail in a later chapter on the influence of Russian media, the Yeltsin campaign's excellent handling of the media was a large factor in this. An alliance of Gusinsky's NTV and Berezovsky's ORT dominated the media in favour of Yeltsin.[152] On television, Yeltsin was able to connect Zyuganov with old Stalinist imagery, while Yeltsin appeared several times as being the reformist who would lead the country with vigour. These two efforts, when combined, reminded the Russian people why they felt like they needed to vote for Yeltsin.

To respond to this, Zyuganov would have had to show some degree of dynamism in addressing the public. Zyuganov was however unprepared for a struggle for election against Yeltsin. He was slow in responding to many of Yeltsin's campaign ploys, including Yeltsin's marshalling of media forces. Despite the great advantage of having a 'real national political party,' the

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[149] Hoffman, David E., The Oligarchs, BBS PublicAffairs, New York, 2002, pp. 325-326.
[150] *Ibid*, p. 328.
[151] Thomson, Oliver, Easily Led: A History of Propaganda, Sutton Publishing, Gloucestershire UK, 1999, p. 33.
[152] McFaul, Michael, Russia's Unfinished Revolution, Cornell University Press, Ithaca NY and London, p. 293.

Communists and their allies were unable to even come close in matching Yeltsin's financial advantage as the incumbent.

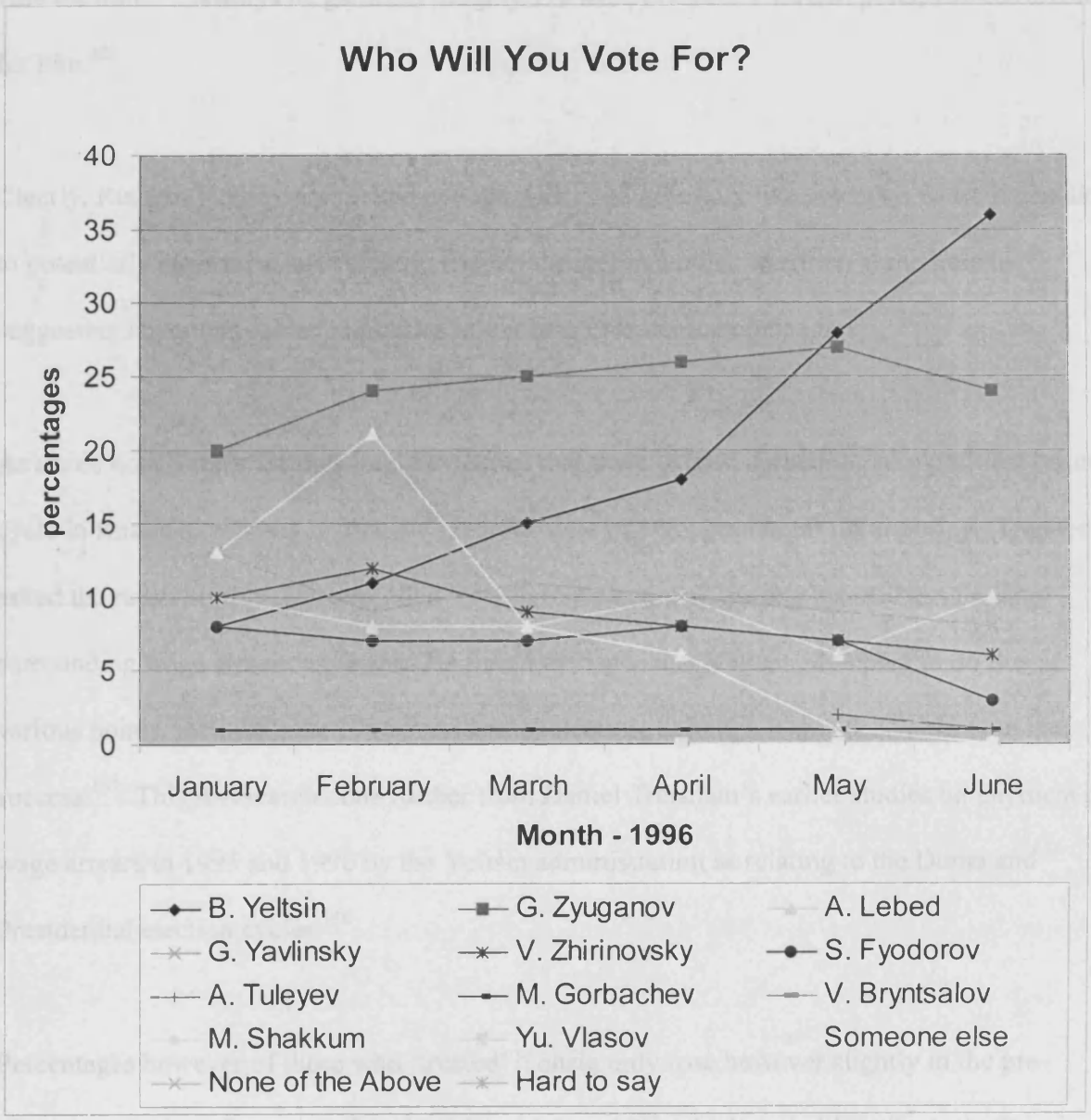
Zyuganov proved not to be as dynamic a personality as Yeltsin. Relying on nationalist themes in speeches and on television, he did not however inspire people to vote for him outside of his 'electoral base.'[153] He also failed to bring any new ideas to the table, thereby relying on old, previously used material to get himself through the campaign. In the end, he allowed Yeltsin to create the perception that Yeltsin was the only person who could keep Russia stable.

Beginning in March 1996, the Yeltsin star began to rise, slowly passing both Lebed and Zyuganov, until, by the eve of the election, most polls predicted a sound defeat of Yeltsin's main opposition candidate, the Communist Zyuganov. Through a well-run campaign, Yeltsin's voting support in surveys started to accelerate rather quickly, as can be seen in the graph below:[154]

(Graph 5):

[153] *Ibid*, pp. 295 - 297.

[154] Question: 'The Central Election Commission has registered the following candidates for the post of President of Russia. For which of them would you cast your ballot, assuming the election was this Sunday?' Possible answers as in Graph 5, VTsIOM, 2-12 June 1996, 1582 respondents (against previous similarly representative polling data). Data taken from: 'Poslednii predvyborny opros VTsIOM: El'tsin-Ziuganov 36-24,' *Segodnia*, No. 102 (707), 13 June 1996, p. 3.



On the other hand, Lebed apparently failed to extend his support beyond his initial base as a potential presidential candidate. Yuri Levada, in his book Ot mneniie k ponimaiu, termed the appearance of Lebed on the political scene as 'the most colourful and strange event in real politics and in public opinion in 1996.' At the same time, however, Levada acknowledges that those who 'trusted' Lebed always polled 2 to 4 times those who actually said that they would

vote for him.[155] Always he gathered roughly 7% who, in direct VTsIOM polls, vowed to vote for him.[156]

Clearly, Russian public opinion had enough nuance to generally like someone without deciding to potentially elect them as President, despite the media's quick attention at the time to suggesting anyone involved in politics might be a Presidential contender.

As a side note, Frank Thames found evidence that there existed something of a political business cycle in Russia as relating to Yeltsin's federal-state intergovernmental fiscal policy. Thames asked the rather simple question, 'Did Yeltsin buy elections?' basing his analysis on data surrounding wage arrears payment. He found evidence that Yeltsin attempted to do this at various points, including the 1996 Presidential election, although it was debatable as to its success.[157] This is research done further from Daniel Treisman's earlier studies on payment of wage arrears in 1995 and 1996 by the Yeltsin administration as relating to the Duma and Presidential election cycles.[158]

Percentages however of those who 'trusted' Yeltsin only rose however slightly in the pre-election period, as documented in the following graph[159], which probably reflects the Russian public's unhappiness with their reasons for voting for Yeltsin:

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[155] Levada, Yuri, Ot mneniie k ponimaiu: sotsiologicheskie ocherki 1993-2000, VTsIOM, Moskovskaia skola politicheskikh issledovaniie, 2000, p. 119.

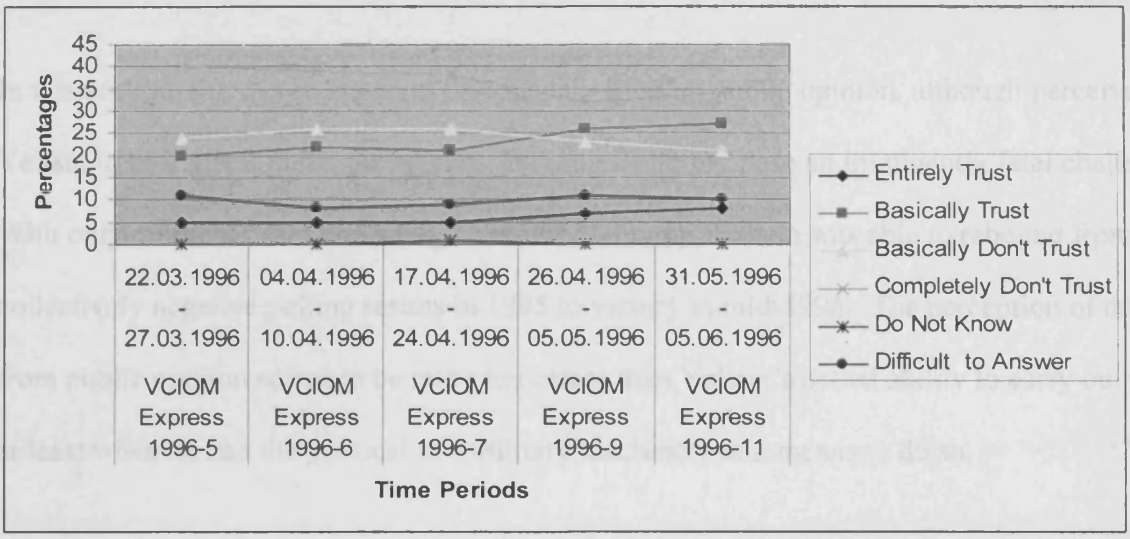
[156] Slight variations of the question: 'The Central Election Commission has registered the following candidates for the post of President of Russia. Which of them would you vote?'
Alexandr Lebed:
7%, VCIOM Express 1996-7, 17.04.1996 - 24.04.1996, 1600 respondents.
7%, VCIOM Express 1996-9, 26.04.1996 - 05.05.1996, 1599 respondents.
7%, VCIOM Express 1996-11, 31.05.1996 - 05.06.1996, 1596 respondents.
http://sofist.socpol.ru/lin.shtml?en=1

[157] Thames Jr., Frank C., 'Did Yeltsin Buy Elections? The Russian Political Business Cycle, 1993-1999,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1, March 2001, pp. 63-76.

[158] Treisman, Daniel, 'Deciphering Russia's Federal Finance: Fiscal Appeasement in 1995 and 1996,' *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 5, 1998, pp. 893-906.

[159] Question: 'In what measure do you trust Boris Yeltsin?' Possible answers as in Graph 6, VCIOM Express 1996-5, 1996-6, 1997-7, 1996-9, all with 1600 respondents.
Website: http://sofist.socpol.ru/lin_que.shtml?B=Display+frequencies&NQ=12477&sch_xml=4&en=1

(Graph 6):



Yeltsin's position as the best of bad choices was secure. Many times, the same people who in the past called for his resignation would vote for him again.

In actual voting Yeltsin won, following an indecisive first round, on 3 July the second round of voting was held. In this official poll, Yeltsin received 53.82% of the vote while Zyuganov received 40.31% of the vote, thereby giving Yeltsin another term in office.[160]

Soon after this, the conflict was concluded, following another short span of violence. Lebed's negotiation of the Khasavyurt Accords, thereby ending the war, put to rest for the moment the Chechen war. Having survived to re-election, Yeltsin no longer had the political will to continue the conflict, especially after successful Chechen military operations during this time period.

Except for VCIOM Express 1996-11, Question: 'To what extent do you trust Boris Yeltsin?,' 31.05.1996 - 05.06.1996, 1596 respondents.
Website: http://sofist.socpol.ru/oprview.shtml?en=1

[160] Sakwa, Richard, Russian Politics and Society, Routledge, London, 2002, pp. 393 – 394.

Ultimately, no matter how unpopular Yeltsin became, substantially (however not exclusively) because of the Chechen war, his presidency won another term in office.

In this section, there is an apparent disconnect. Russian public opinion, although perceived by Yeltsin to be a threat to his presidency, did not effectively pose an imminently fatal challenge. With only minimal effort and a large amount of money, Yeltsin was able to rebound from collectively negative polling results in 1995 to victory in mid-1996. The perception of danger from public opinion seems to be more important than Yeltsin's actual ability to carry out policy, at least when he had the political and military machinery and means to do so.

For re-election, Yeltsin had at least to be perceived as being responsive to Russian public opinion, suing for peace in Chechnya. As seen in this section, Yeltsin was still seen as the 'lesser' of all evils, and his initiation of the Chechen war did nothing to help, and much to nearly destroy, his political standing.

1999 – The Beginning of War II

In 1999, following a series of career promotions from being an almost unknown former KGB colonel to being Prime Minister,[161] Vladimir Putin led Russia once again to attempt to militarily pacify Chechnya. This section will look at trends in public opinion as connected to the resumption of Russian offensive military action including invasion. Also to be examined is the role of the Chechen war in affecting support for Putin's rise as the second President of Russia.

From his August 1999 appointment as Prime Minister to his designation as Yeltsin's successor in December 1999, Vladimir Putin, in concert with his policy of renewed invasion of Chechnya,

[161] A short list as told by President Putin's website: http://www.kremlin.ru/articles/V_Putin.shtml.

sought to create for himself the image of the strong hand necessary to right the perceived chaos and injustices of the Yeltsin era. At the same time, Putin's orientation as future President of Russia evolved from his, as Vladimir Shlapentokh explains, 'lack of ideology.'

> 'The deeply eclectic character of Putin's ideology suggests that he simply does not have an ideology at all. His mind continues to puzzle the Moscow experts who have been trying to track down Putin's vision of the world for the last 4 years.'[162]

Putin's basis for his rise to power was natural to an extent. In an interview with Matthew Evangelista 17 days before her suspicious death (after introducing a motion in the Duma to censure an anti-Semite Communist deputy), even a progressive Russian parliamentarian such as Galina Starovoytova had this to say about Putin, 'The Chief of the FSB, Mr. Putin, is a pretty reasonable guy. I know him.'[163] Further to this was, it must be noted, the support for the second Chechen war by even liberals like Anatoli Chubais (formerly of the anti-war camp for the first Chechen war).[164]

In the context of this, both for the purposes of resolving the Chechen issue and for at least seeming to fight against corruption, Putin became the most popular domestic politician in Russia.[165] This level of popularity came about with extraordinary ease given the nature of Yeltsin's political standing, and relatively without resistance, as shown by Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov's and former Prime Minister Yevgenii Primakov's failure to adequately oppose this change through their Fatherland-All-Russia Party (OVR). Such is the case also in view of and

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[162] Shlapentokh, Vladimir, 'The Short Time Horizon in the Russian Mind,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 1, Mar. 2005, p. 10. (pp. 1-24)
[163] Evangelista, Matthew, 'An Interview With Galina Starovoytova,' *Post-Soviet Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3, Jul.-Sept. 1999, p. 289 (pp. 281-290).
[164] Shevtsova, Lilia, Putin's Russia, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC, 2003, p. 43.
[165] 'According to the latest public opinion poll conducted by the Public Opinion Foundation, Russia's President Vladimir Putin is the indisputable leader in the Man of the Year title. 43% of the respondents gave that title to Putin in replying to an 'open' question, one containing no prompts.' *Strana.ru*, 27 December 2000, Johnson's Russia List, http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/4711.html.

including arguments of Unity's necessarily superior support: 'The resources at OVR's fingertips were evidently second only to Unity's.'[166]

Research by others has found that this failure to oppose Unity extended to the regions of Russia also. As Natalya Lapina finds:

> 'With the end of 1999, in Iaroslavsk and Samarsk oblasts, there began to create regional departments of the new party of power, Unity. Mechanisms to create a new party in the regions were distinctive. In Iaroslavsk oblast, Unity became a straightforward successor to 'Fatherland.' Unity – says one from the leadership of the city administration – it was 80% of the former Fatherland. In the regions, all transferred into Unity, and Fatherland practically disintegrated.'[167]

Returning to the question of Chechnya, initially from a personal standpoint, Putin was put into a position of responsibility for decisions that were not necessarily his own. As Pavel Baev describes it:

> 'Putin, therefore, was placed in the uncomfortable position of assuming full responsibility for a decision he had not made and presiding over an operation he had no possibility to control. Nevertheless, he did the best possible job in this position, making the war into his personal crusade and reassuring the suspicious generals that he was ready to go all the way for a hard-won triumph.'[168]

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[166] Colton, Timothy J. and Michael McFaul, Popular Choice and Managed Democracy, Brookings Institution Press, Washington DC, 2003, p. 88.
[167] Lapina, N., 'Politicheskie partii I perspecpektivy pertiinogo stroitel'stva v Samarskoi I Iaroslavskoi oblastiakh,' Regional'nye protsessy v sovremennoi Rossii, Rossiiskaia Akademiia Nauk, Moskva, 2003, p. 154.
[168] Baev, Pavel K., 'Putin's War in Chechnya: Who Steers the Course?' PONARS Policy Memo No. 345, International Peace Institute Centre, Oslo, November 2004.

However, many accounts say that Putin took this responsibility with something of a great desire. Michael McFaul refers to this even as a 'passion:'

> 'Everyone who has discussed the Chechen war with Putin personally will tell you that he expresses real passion only about his resolve to "destroy the Chechen terrorists."[169]

Contrary to much of the conspiracy theory to be mentioned (especially from those saying that the whole year of 1999 in Russian politics and the Russian presidential succession was carefully staged), a successful and popular Chechen policy based on invasion, especially in the eyes of Russian public opinion, was not necessarily automatic. This section found that this is the case from the standpoint of Putin himself as well. It is difficult to believe that the sequence of events as to be discussed next was part of any grand plan or high strategy contained within.

Looking at catalysts for the war, perhaps most immediate in regard to Chechen policy in Russian public opinion is what has become known collectively as the apartment bombings.

The August 1999 apartment bombings in Russia, in Moscow, in Buinaksk and in Volgodonsk together causing almost 300 deaths, brought alarm to Russian public opinion. Such was the case not least of which because, as will be explored, the Russian government blamed an old enemy, Chechen rebels, without substantial evidence, for these terrorist attacks. Further attacks in Moscow at 'Okhotny Riad' brought the death toll to about 700 people.[170] These events hit Russian public opinion close to home, and gave a level of immediacy to the Chechen issue as portrayed by Putin. Due to these events, a degree of panic set in, with some inhabitants in the major cities organizing round-the-clock patrolling of their own apartment buildings. Journalists

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[169] McFaul, Michael, 'One Step Forward, Two Steps Back,' *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 11, No. 3, Jul. 2000, p. 21.
[170] Kagarlitsky, Boris, Russia Under Yeltsin and Putin, p. 230 - 231.

reported on stories concerning the possibility of bombs in other locales, thereby enhancing the level of terror at the time.

Differing accounts of possible bombings were rampant at the time, some blaming the FSB also. Only one example of these stories is necessary here:

> 'In the aftermath of the apartment bombings, increased awareness further led to the possibility of a fifth bomb in Ryazan that had failed to explode. This particular story relates to when a resident of an apartment block in Ryazan called the police in response to a strange car being seen in front of his building: 'A few minutes later, so did Vladimir Vasiliev, a 53-year-old radio engineer, who not only saw the Zhiguli and the pasted-on license numbers but got a look at the people inside before it pulled away. There were two men and a woman, he says. They looked not like Chechens, who tend to be darker-skinned, but like Russians.'
>
> And later when the police investigated:
>
> 'Vasiliev, the radio engineer, watched the police load the sacks into the back of a police car. He says that they looked like ordinary 100-pound bags of sugar and that some of the white powder fell on the ground. But when a resident who works in a chemical lab went to take a sample the next day, the spill had been cleaned up.'
>
> The next day, FSB chief Nikolai P. Patrushev announced on the evening news that it was just an 'exercise.'[171]

[171] Reynolds, Maura, 'Fears of Bombing Turns to Doubts for Some in Russia,' *Los Angeles Times*, 15 Jan. 2000, Johnson's Russia List, http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/4039.html#2.

In respect to opinion on support for a Chechen invasion, based on other polling data analysed in this chapter, there is however little evidence from research that these stories focussing on the possibility of a FSB plot had serious traction in public opinion. Support for the government increased, if anything, during this time period. Based on reports such as where Putin was chosen by public opinion to be 'Man of the Year,' there is a basis for showing that Russians had little regard for questioning their new leader after these incidences.[172]

Notably, the type of terrorism had changed also, as Irina Mukhina points out:

> '[...]between the wars, kidnappings (which previously occurred only episodically) assumed a mass character, and explosions replaced hostage-taking as a major form of Chechen terrorism.'[173]

As Mukhina also points out, this would remain the case until the 2002 Nord-Ost incident. It could be argued that, in the context of this thesis, this change in terrorist tactics could have a bearing on analysis. However it is important to note that, as will be reiterated in future sections on the time period, unlike in previous hostage-taking episodes, the Nord-Ost incident caused little change in favour of the Chechen rebels in Russian public opinion and much support for Putin against them.

Secondarily immediate for the Russian government specifically in trying to contain Chechnya were the August and September 1999 invasions of Dagestan by elements of Chechen 'militia' led by the familiar name and well-known warlord Shamil Basaev. Some say these invasions

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[172] See again: 'According to the latest public opinion poll conducted by the Public Opinion Foundation, Russia's President Vladimir Putin is the indisputable leader in the Man of the Year title. 43% of the respondents gave that title to Putin in replying to an 'open' question, one containing no prompts.' *Strana.ru*, 27 Dec. 2000, Johnson's Russia List, http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/4711.html.

[173] Mukhina, Irina, 'Islamic Terrorism and the Question of National Liberation, or Problems of Contemporary Chechen Terrorism,' *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 28, No. 6, Nov. 2005, p. 520. (pp. 515-532)

were connected to Al-Qaida.[174] Basaev shared in the belief of a number of Chechen fighters that the state borders of Chechnya in effect did not exist, and that a large republic should be created encompassing a greater section of the northern Caucasus, setting up an Islamic state, with law strictly based on the Qo'ran and shariat. Foreign jihadists now had a prominent role in these incursions; one co-leader of this invasion was Emir al Khattab, a Jordanian of ethnic Chechen origins.

This development made the Russian governmental position between 1996 and 1999 of Chechen containment no longer tenable. Little regard had been given in this period to settling the situation with the elected second Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov, and so Russia was by 1999 suffering the effects of this. Of course, one can also argue the inverse of this. This is the position that elements of the Russian government were using the rise of Chechen fanaticism and instability towards gaining power themselves.

In this complex environment, the rise of Wahhabist influence in Chechnya and in neighbouring Dagestan was no help. Although always a minority: 'usually estimated at 5 to 10 percent, the Wahhabis became very active and vocal.'[175] Through their orthodoxy, relative rigidity of religious order, and their desired application of political Islam, they represented a rising threat to both secular Chechen and secular Russian regimes, and to less fundamentalist religious order in the region.

On this subject, perhaps the best source for explaining the ascendance of different 'Islams' as arising from a global struggle involving radicalism, including in Chechnya, Brian Glyn Williams

[174] Kisriev, Enver and Robert Bruce Ware, 'Russian Hegemony in Dagestan,' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 21, No. 1, Jan.-Mar. 2005, p. 26. (pp. 26-55)
[175] Lanskoy, Miriam, 'Dagestan and Chechnya: The Wahhabi Challenge to the State,' *SAIS Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2, Summer-Fall 2002, p. 171. (pp. 167-192)

wrote an excellent article detailing the 'role' of the Chechen conflict in the broader schemes of worldwide confrontation:[176]

> 'The Wahhabis used their considerable funds to undermine local religious authorities (including the Mufti-Head Cleric of Chechnya, Akhmed Kadyrov, who is a Sufi) and to combat the influence of the moderate political leaders among the Chechens. On occasion, secular nationalist Chechen field commanders, such as the notorious Yamadiyev brothers, responded by clashing with the overbearing Wahhabi fighters who made themselves as unwelcome among *Sufi*-moderates in Chechnya as the swaggering Arabs of the 055 Brigade had among the average people of Afghanistan.'

In such an atmosphere analyzed in the above article, Russian influence and their 'backyard' understanding on Chechnya during the inter-war period further discouraged both internal and external aid to the area.

Thereby, international aid was no more forthcoming. Relative to the instability of the time period, research by Tomila Lankina found that as proportional to overall aid to Russia in respect to population density, EU support was lacking for the North Caucasus region. While again cautioning that ethnicity was not a clear factor in aid distribution, Lankina finds that:

> 'A closer look at the data reveals that entities most under-represented [in respect to aid] are the Muslim republics of the North Caucasus and Volga areas, and not ethnic regions per se.'[177]

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[176] Williams, Brian Glyn, 'Jihad and Ethnicity in Post-Communist Eurasia. On the Trail of Transnational Islamic Holy Warriors in Kashmir, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Chechnya and Kosovo,' *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 2, No. 3-4, March/June 2003, p. 16. (pp. 3-24)

[177] Lankina, Tomila, 'European Union Aid to Russia,' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 21, No. 4, Oct.-Dec. 2005, p. 326. (pp. 309-334)

Putin's view of Russia as a great power has been interconnected with what Russia specialist Andrei Tsygankov calls the Russia's great power normalization. This thesis disagrees with Tsygankov when he writes:

> 'The state's record of responding to Russia's security needs, however, is dismal, with the Chechnya issue remaining the No. 1 source of concern. Although people continue to have trust in the president, increasingly, many feel he has failed to deliver on his promise to eliminate the sources of terrorism.'[178]

In fact, much data has been found and will be explained in future sections and chapters that particularly Tsygankov's implication that the Chechen issue is people's 'number 1 concern' is misplaced. However, this thesis finds that he has a point when he later writes:

> 'The issue of Chechnya, as well as Russia's international situation, will continue to affect Putin's strategy of great-power normalization.'[179]

There is evidence, some within this thesis, to show that Putin does have, as Tsygankov principally writes, a view that Russia can only survive as a country if it is a great power that can actively address military problems in a 'normal' global context. Also part of this attempt by Putin to improve Russia's ability to address military problems at this point was his policies to reform the Russian Army itself, which, as Dale Herspring argues, were only partially successful in terms of creating 'a modern fighting force.'[180]

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[178] Tsygankov, Andrei P., 'Vladimir Putin's Vision of Russia as a Normal Great Power,' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 21, No. 2, Apr.-Jun. 2005, p. 154. (pp. 132-158)
[179] *Ibid*, p. 154.
[180] Herspring, Dale R. 'Putin and the Re-emergence of the Russian Military,' *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 54, No. 1, Jan./Feb. 2007, p. 20. (pp. 17-27)

In so far as the initiation of hostilities at this point in 1999, support was quite high for Putin and the invasion. The first test of the acceptance of Putin as a potential future president and for his war policy can be inferred from looking at the 1999 Russian parliamentary elections. August to December of 1999 showed a remarkable amount of support amongst Russian public opinion for a war in Chechnya and for a Prime Minster whom the Russian people in many ways barely knew. Discrediting Luzhkov and Primakov as presidential contenders by the defeat of their Fatherland All-Russia (OVR) party in December 1999 was paramount in this time period also.

In this context, Vladimir Gel'man finds that a coalescing of a new ideological elite from 1994 to the present era. Examining the 1999 parliamentary elections on this basis is essential. Gel'man finds that:

> 'Putin's presidency changed the structure of the elite dramatically, which had a decisive impact on political opposition in Russia. Simultaneously, elite integration sharply increased and elite differentiation became very limited as a result of the "imposed consensus" of elites. Thanks to these developments, the new ruling group around Putin overwhelmingly dominated Russia's political scene, and all remaining elite sections (parliamentary factions, media, business, and regional leaders) had to agree on their subordinated role or lost their elite status as such.'[181]

As part of this, the Kremlin-engineered Unity party led by Sergei Shoigu became representative of Putin himself in this context. Aiming at the centre of Russian public opinion, Unity was portrayed by the Yeltsin administration as the party of stability. Striving for unity above all else, hence its name, the party also quickly became the focus of the national media attention as well.

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[181] Gel'man, Vladimir, 'Political Opposition in Russia,' *Post-Soviet Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3, pp. 232-233. (pp. 226-246) Gel'man also refers in this quote to his previous article: Gel'man, Vladimir, 'Russia's Elites in Search of Consensus: What Kind of Consolidation?' Elites and Development in Russia, (eds.) Anton Steen and Vladimir Gel'man, Routledge, London, 2003.

The fight between Unity and the Fatherland-All-Russia (OVR) alliance was 'extremely negative'[182] in this time period. Yeltsin opponents Yuri Luzhkov, Yevgenii Primakov, and their allies did not give up their earlier dominance so easily. Yet, the perks of incumbency proved to be overwhelming, and pro-Yeltsin oligarch Boris Berezovsky[183], was on Unity's side. Protecting the 'existing Kremlin team'[184] from these outsiders was the biggest priority. OVR was overwhelmed by these forces, and failed to break through. Another side of this struggle, as to be discussed later, was that Gusinsky's NTV media company supported OVR, and in time this would make both NTV and Gusinsky himself into a target of the Kremlin.

Russian public opinion, owing to the low amount of party support, loyalty, and affiliation inherent to the country was certainly open to the introduction of a new movement representing the centre of Russian politics.

ROMIR had similar polling results on assessing parties, but showing Unity even in the lead against the Communists (22% to 18%).[185] Reasons for this support can be seen in the aspirations of Russian public opinion at the time. It had been a long time since Russian public opinion had had a leader and a party supported overtly by that same leader that appeared to be strong and gave some small degree of hope in the strength of Russia as a country.

It is clear that, in many ways, Russians supported whatever might be the policy of the Russian government on the subject of the second Chechen war. Primarily, research finds that Russian public opinion cared little for the 'Chechnya' issue in regard to Putin. Unlike during the first

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[182] Wyman, Matthew, 'Elections and Voters,' Developments in Russian Politics, Edition 5, (eds.) Stephen White, Alex Pravda, and Zvi Gitelman, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2001, p. 67.
[183] 'With slavish coverage of ORT television, Berezovsky helped Putin get elected president for a four-year term on March 27, 2000.' Hoffman, David E., The Oligarchs, Public Affairs, New York, 2002, p. 485.
[184] Wyman, Matthew, 'Elections and Voters,' Developments in Russian Politics, Edition 5, (eds.) Stephen White, Alex Pravda, and Zvi Gitelman, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2001,p. 66.
[185] Karush, Sarah, 'MT Poll: Shoigu's Bloc Is Soaring,' *Moscow Times*, 15 December 1999.

war, Putin and his perceived image would dominate the Chechen war, and not the other way around when the Chechen war policy seemed to dominate Yeltsin. However, this modality led to some contradictions in data.

For example, a late December 1999 poll by VTsIOM shows 59% of people who supported the war also supported an independent Chechnya, and 48% said they would support a negotiated end IF Putin supported it versus a 42% saying no.[186] These figures seem to show further how Chechnya was an independent variable in the Russian public consideration of Putin.

However, developments in Chechnya, and in the broader scope of the Russian military, can be shown to affect public support for Putin over the long term, as will be documented in the next section. It is clear when studying facts of this nature that the 'Cult of Putin' went far beyond a simple drive for war, but was still attached to Chechnya through Putin's initiation and maintenance of the conflict, and it is another representation of the aforementioned respect for Russian public opinion of the leadership in building a consensus for government. Given that a more pronounced war on information will develop and a public willing to accept that state of affairs did each have its own limits, Putin enjoyed a fair amount of leeway in public support for his prosecution of the war, unlike the more immediate drop in support for Yeltsin in regard to the first war.

2000 Conflict Continuation – Sustained Support

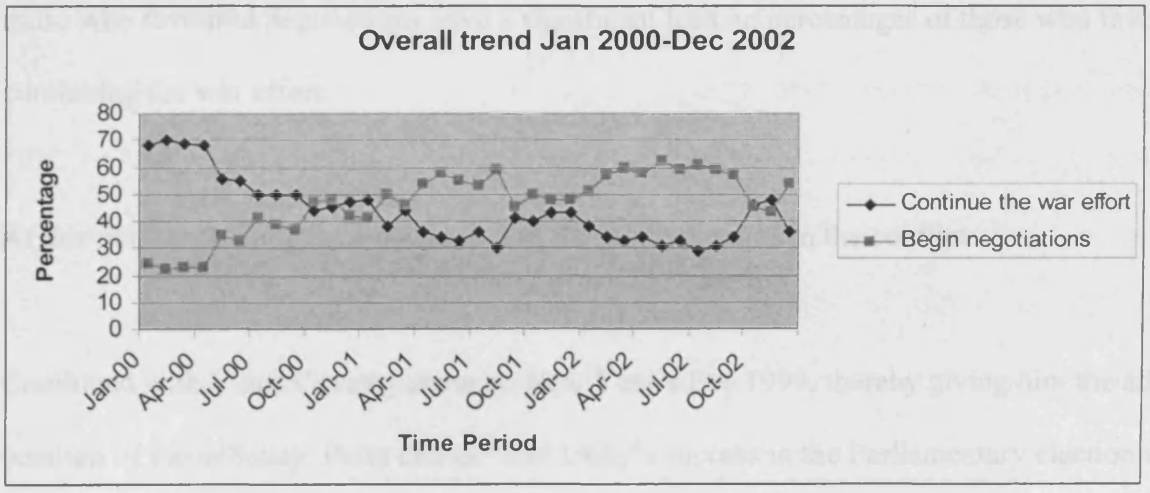
Trends in Russian public opinion continued to show support for Putin, and at least tacit acceptance for his Chechen policy at least in the time period studied in this thesis. Specifically, Russian public support did not fail to acknowledge the second war as being something of a

[186] Hale, Henry, 'Is Russian Nationalism On The Rise?' *PONARS Policy Memo No. 110*, Harvard University, Feb. 2000.

policy of necessity (i.e. Putin's portrayal) as it did in the first war. Nevertheless, over time the second Chechen war was consistently unpopular on a *theoretical* level, although this did not translate into unpopularity for Putin.

Firstly, however, we will examine the overall trends of support for the second Chechen war over the course of the time period studied. Particularly thanks to improved surveying by Yuri Levada and his foundation and by others, a more thorough study of these overall trends can be made, much more so than in the case of the first war, where statistics are more uneven and questioning over time had greater variation. After this discussion, there will be an analysis of the point by point trends concerning specific events relative to the conflict.

(Graph 7):[187]



According to these statistics (which are confirmed by other data that will be discussed), only at two points does Russian public opinion converge between the two opposing answers after April 2001 when the percentage of those who support the war drops considerably below the percentage who want to begin negotiations.

[187] Question: 'How do you consider, should war actions in Chechnya continue os should negotiations begin?' Possible answers as in Graph 7, Levada Foundation web site: http://www.levada.ru/chechnya.html.

The first time is the period surrounding the 11 September tragedy in America. Notice particularly how, in September and October 2001, the percentage of those who would opt to continue the war effort rose over ten percentage points in correlation with the opposing drop in those supporting a beginning to negotiations.

The second instance of a significant parallel rise is the time of the Nord-Ost hostage-taking incident, which will mark the conclusion of the time periods studied in this thesis. In October and November of 2002, for the first time since January 2001, the percentage of those who supported the war effort rose about those who wanted to begin negotiations.

This is significant because only in the beginning of the war and during these two instances were percentages tending to favour the war in Russian public opinion. Otherwise, percentages of those who favoured negotiations have a significant lead on percentages of those who favoured continuing the war effort.

At this point there must be a discussion of the relative points in the conflict:

Combined with Yeltsin's resignation on New Year's Eve 1999, thereby giving him the additional position of incumbency, Putin carried over Unity's success in the Parliamentary election into his own election in March 2000 as President with 52.9 percent of the vote.[188]

From the beginning, there was little doubt that Putin would be victorious in the Presidential election; polling results indicated that the public at the very least accepted Putin as a future President, his opposition was unimpressive, and was combined with a mass media that was conveniently 'light' on Putin criticism. Often, the biggest topic of conversation among political

[188] Brudny, Yitzhak M, 'Russian Electoral Patterns: 1999-2000,' Contemporary Russian Politics: A Reader, (ed.) Archie Brown, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 173.

observers was in fact, given the state of the media, whether or not Gennadi Zyuganov, who ran again for the Communists, could push Putin into a second round or not, and not whether Putin could be defeated.

In surveys conducted by the for Public Opinion Foundation[189] on Putin, Yavlinsky, and Zyuganov voters after the presidential vote, there were clear trends that were developed between the choices by voters. For all three of those candidates, those in favour of Chechnya leaving Russia were fairly steady, with responses of 17 to 20%. There were marked differences, however, between voters' choices for President and the lengths to which Russia should go to in order to keep Chechnya. Those who voted for Yavlinsky tended not to make the strongest choice on the survey, 'to keep Chechnya at all costs', categorised as a 1 out of 5 on the survey answer (5 being 'to let Chechnya go'). This is in contrast to Putin's voters, who had the strongest low answers, with 42% responding that Chechnya should be held at all costs. Also, not surprisingly, Yavlinsky had the strongest support of people who supported democracy, with 80%, while Zyuganov had the lowest support in this category, with 50%. Putin was pointedly in the middle in this debate, with 68% saying that they supported democracy.[190]

Some polling data did however show that Putin was still not completely unassailable, but still in a period of making his views and policies known to the Russian people. July 2000 national polling by ROMIR revealed that 33% of Russian citizens were still unsure of Putin, while still a majority (54%) either approved or somewhat approved of President Putin. At the same time, 63% had not changed their opinion of President Putin.[191] What this reveals is that by July 2000, Putin had still not anchored his hold over Russian public opinion, at least not to the heights of

[189] As quoted by Colton, Timothy J. and Michael McFaul, 'Putin and Democratization,' Putin's Russia, (ed.) Dale R. Herspring, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., Oxford, 2003.
[190] Colton, Timothy J. and Michael McFaul, 'Putin and Democratization,' Putin's Russia, (ed.) Dale R. Herspring, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., Oxford, 2003, p. 34.
[191] ROMIR, 'Otnoshenie rossiian k Vladimira Putinu (Iiul'),' July 2000 polling of 2000 adults in 115 locations of 40 federal subjects: http://web.archive.org/web/20000829181640/www.romir.ru/socpolit/vvps/07_2000/putin-july.htm.

support that he would in future acquire, ranging between 70 to 80% support as he gained years later. Still a very large percentage saw him with a bit of scepticism, which was muted however as no other Russian politician like Zyuganov could gain the support of this undecided quotient.

When examining this data, some parallels can be seen. Similarly as compared to the Yeltsin era, Russian public opinion by September 2002 still had an element of romanticism with the past. In VTsIOM polling data, 39% still preferred to live in the times of Brezhnev versus 23% who preferred to live in Putin's times.[192] When put against the backdrop of socialism (as per Brezhnev) versus 'democracy' as per Yeltsin/Putin, this is little changed from previously cited polling data from 1995. Nevertheless, Russian public opinion will be trending somewhat differently in the Putin era.

The first months of 2000 revealed that, according to VTsIOM polling data, optimism for the war declined slightly, even among war supporters between December of 1999 and April of 2000. 43% of war 'hawks' thought that the rebels would be defeated and Chechnya soundly returned to Russia in April 2000, as compared to 52% in December 1999. 35% of 'hawks' and 36% of 'doves' believed in April 2000 that the conflict would spread to the whole of the northern Caucasus, versus 22 and 29% in 1999. Corresponding to this, respondents who believed that the war would take the same course as the first war went up slightly.[193]

By July 2000, the Chechen resistance began to rely more and more on a tactic used by other Muslim uprisings in particular the Arab Middle East, but until this point (and especially in the

[192] Question, 'If you could live your life anew, in what times and where would you prefer to live?' Possible answers: 1) In Brezhnev's times 2) In Putin's times 3) In another country 4) In Russia before 1917 5) In times of the first 5-year plans 6) In Khrushchev's times 7) In perestroika times. VTsIOM, October 2002, 1600 respondents. 'Russian Public Opinion 2002,' VTsIOM, Moscow, 2003, p. 12.
[193] Gudkov, Lev, 'Antimobilizatsionnyi potentsial rossiiskogo obshestva,' VTsIOM, *Monitoring obchestvennogo mneniia*, No. 6, Vol. 50, Nov.-Dec. 2000, p. 48.

first war) had not had a role to play in the overall Chechen situation, that is the role of the unpredictable suicide bomber.[194]

In the same period of time, Russian public opinion agreed with the political direction that Putin supported. VTsIOM data revealed that 61% said they viewed Putin's performance positively, against 26% who said the opposite.[195] The change in tactics in Chechnya apparently had little effect on the view of Putin in Russian public opinion, and thereby on the issue on which Putin had rode to Presidential victory.

Overall, this time period also corresponded with a new trend in public opinion to gain some degree of national pride again in Russia. Putin began to promote for instance, a return to the Soviet national anthem to acknowledge this pride. November polling data showed that, whereas the coat of arms and the flag adopted under Yeltsin were easily acceptable to Russian public opinion, the music was deficient.[196] Soon hereafter, the Soviet anthem was once again adopted, with new words to clear the taint of communism. In regard to the Chechen war, the need for Putin to summon sources of patriotic fervour could not be understated. In a developing state such as Russia of 2000, with a popular President sitting at the head of what was supposed to be a 'democratic' state, such choice opportunities for public support could not be ignored.

In monthly opinion polling conducted by VTsIOM from June to August, and then in November and December 2000, Putin's approval rating remained solidly high and generally increased,

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[194] See Speckhard, Anne and Khapta Akhmedova, 'The Makings of a Martyr: Chechen Suicide Terrorism,' *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 29, No. 5, 2006, pp. 429-492.

[195] Question: 'Could you say if you on the whole approve or not of the job Vladimir Putin is doing as President of Russia?' 61% approved:26% did not approve:13% no answer, VCIOM Express 2000-17,
Question asked of 1600 respondents between 30.06.2000 and 04.07.2000.
website: http://sofist.socpol.ru/xml_view.shtml?en=1&HQ=8029&SQ=156&HSQ=2

[196] Positive to Negative Responses on question: Do you like the present [...], or not?
Russian State Flag: I like it: 68%/I don't like it: 20%/Hard to answer: 12%.
Russian State Coat Of Arms: I like it: 64%/I don't like it: 24%/Hard to answer: 12%.
Russian State Anthem: I like it: 32%/I don't like it: 43%/Hard to answer: 25%.
Question asked of 1500 respondents in 29 regions, territories and republics on 14-15 October 2000.
Public Opinion Foundation website. http://english.fom.ru/survey/dominant/6/16/57.html

except for the month of August, in response to probably the damage inflicted on the reputation of the government and on the Putin Administration from the mismanagement of the Kursk disaster. Of course, incompetence[197] in dealing with the lost flagship submarine of the Russian naval fleet was less easy to hide than any incompetence in the remote Chechnya, given the level of media manipulation as to be examined in chapter four.

Corresponding to this, disapproval ratings went generally down for Prime Minister Kasyanov and President Putin, again except for the August Kursk imbroglio. As usual, the Russian government continued to suffer from high disapproval ratings, as befitting its reputation in Russian society as being responsible for the usual host of problems from popular perceptions of corruption and from economic issues.

(Data Set 1):[198]

Approval:

	June 2000	July 2000	Aug. 2000	Nov. 2000	Dec. 2000
President Putin	61	73	60	70	68
Prime Minister Kasyanov	45	49	42	47	43
Government of Russia as a Whole	34	38	38	38	38
Governor of Your Oblast	47	53	53	52	50

Disapproval:

	June 2000	July 2000	Aug. 2000	Nov. 2000	Dec. 2000
President Putin	26	17	30	22	23
Prime Minister Kasyanov	30	25	37	32	34
Government of Russia as a Whole	47	42	49	46	48
Governor of Your Oblast	39	36	38	37	37

[197] See Moore, Robert, A Time To Die: The Kursk Disaster, Doubleday, London, 2002. Also recommended for some argument on this issue in relation to the Chechen conflict, see: Daly, John C. K, 'The Kursk Explosion: A Result of Dagestani Sabotage?' *The Analyst*, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 25 Oct. 2000.

[198] Information from Levada-era VTsIOM website (no longer posted), Special Report, 25 September 2001, http://www.wciom.ru/vciom/new/press

It is clear that in the second half of 2000, with Putin consolidating his position as the now fully elected President of Russia, some trends that would set the tone for the entirety of the next two years of the Chechen war become obvious.

When asked what politicians they 'trusted' as opposed to 'approving the activities of', respondents were similarly in favour of their President. A second point is also at issue, in what could have been an advantageous possibility for the Communists. Representing what was the major opposition candidate in the previous Presidential election and also the head of the major 'opposition' party in the Duma, Zyuganov came in second in similar polling data from a collection of surveys from the *Monitoring of Economic and Social Changes in Russia* series.

In this data, Zyuganov was the only other politician who could reliably muster double-digit trust ratings. In individual months, Sergei Shoigu, Yevgeni Primakov, and Tuleev could manage barely 10% trust ratings, but overall they remained in single-digit level ratings. In every month, Putin's rating was easily more than 20% above Zyuganov.[199]

ROMIR polling data from a national survey conducted in 22-24 September 2000 of 1111 adults revealed much the same result. Putin's approval ratings in this survey (of those who wholly or somewhat approve of his performance) measured 65% versus 24% who had opposite negative views of the President. Measuring change from March 2000, 78% had a better or the same view of Putin as before. Only 17% said their perception was worse.[200]

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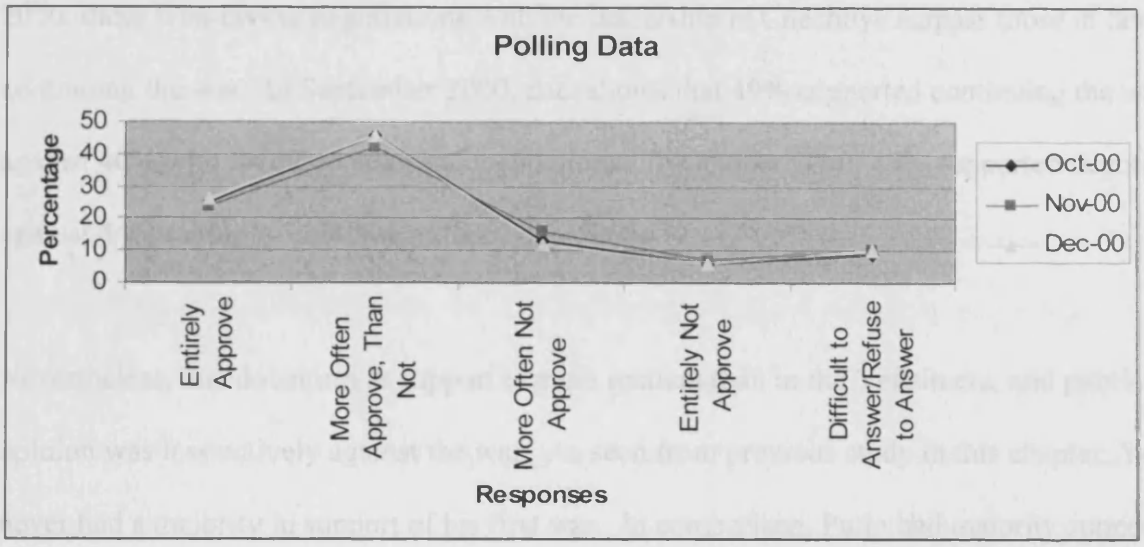
[199] 2405 respondents surveyed with 58 possible answers plus 'other,' 'no one' and 'difficult to answer.' In answer to the proposition, 'List 5-6 Russian Politicians You Trust Most.' *Monitoring of Social and Economic Changes in Russia 2000-09*, website: http://sofist.socpol.ru/xml_view.shtml?en=1&HQ=4061&SQ=49&HSQ=20 [also see: VTsIOM, Special Report, 25 September 2001, http://www.wciom.ru/vciom/new/press.]

[200] ROMIR, www.romir.ru/eng/research/putin-september.htm.

Additional October to December 2000 ROMIR polling data confirms this as seen from the graph below, in answer to the question: 'To what degree do you approve or disapprove of the activities of President Putin?'

(Graph 8):[201]



Especially noted from the above graph the level of consistency over the last months of 2000 in general support for Putin.

Further surveys conducted by the Public Opinion Foundation found that in regard to Russia, Putin's hold over the Presidency was as secure as ever with only a two percent deviation between mid-September and early November (41% on 16-17 September 2000 said they would vote for him again should an election be held versus 43% on 4-5 November 2000). Putin's closest rival, Zyuganov, held at 15% throughout this time period. Noticeably, whereas Putin's

[201] Question: 'To what degree do you approve or disapprove of the activities of President Putin?' Possible answers as in Graph 7, ROMIR, 2000 respondents from fieldwork conducted 1.10.2000 to 31.12.2000. Data from ROMIR Omnibi 2000-10, 2000-11 and 2000-12:
http://sofist.socpol.ru/lin_que.shtml?B=Display+frequencies&NQ=3950&sch_xml=3&en=1

rejection numbers (people saying they would never vote for him) never rose above 8%, all major rivals had rejection figures not below 21%.[202]

On the issue of the Chechen war, to the end of 2000, public opinion was drifting in favour of negotiations. Analyses conducted by VTsIOM confirm that between September and October 2000, those who favour negotiations with the leadership in Chechnya surpass those in favour of continuing the war. In September 2000, data shows that 49% supported continuing the war against 40% who favoured entering negotiations. In October 2000, 47% supported negotiations against 44% saying to continue military operations.[203]

Nevertheless, this downturn in support is more gradual than in the Yeltsin era, and public opinion was less actively against the war. As seen from previous study in this chapter, Yeltsin never had a majority in support of his first war. In comparison, Putin had majority support for his Chechen policy for the first 11 months. This is particularly significant in that the first war only lasted 19 months.

Putin seemed to be representing the will of the Russian people in general and, in reference to his Chechnya policy, public opinion appears to have possessed less enthusiasm for meaningful opposition. Olga Kryshtanovskaya and Stephen White relate this in an article for *Post-Soviet Studies* to the idea of a desire of Russians for a 'military-security president' operating under the continuing myth of a Yuri Andropov figure that could have saved the Soviet Union.[204] This

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[202] In response to the question: 'Please imagine that the presidential elections are going to be held this Sunday. Which of the following Presidential candidates would you vote for?' Nation-wide surveys conducted in 29 regions, territories and republics. 1500 respondents. Additional polls of the Moscow population, with a sample of 600 respondents. Public Opinion Foundation website: http://english.fom.ru/reports/frames/ed002901.html

[203] Question: 'How do you consider, right now should Russia continue the prosecution of war in Chechnya or enter into negotiations with the leadership of Chechnya?' Possible answers: 1) Continue the war 2) Enter into negotiations. VTsIOM, *Monitoring obchestvennogo mneniia*, Vol. 6, No. 50, Noiabr-Dekabr' 2000, p. 7.

[204] Kryshtanovskaya, Olga and Stephen White, 'Putin's Militocracy,' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 19, No. 4, October-December 2003, p. 291. (pp. 289-306)

indeed surely had some bearing on Russian public opinion, and continuing on many fronts, economic, political and military, this is of great importance in consideration of prevailing issues.

For example, in polling data for the New Year 2001, positives appeared on the economic front along with the usual negatives.[205] Surveys by ROMIR and published by *Vremia novostei* revealed that many Russians had 'restrained optimism' with 33% saying that the new year would be better, 37% saying it would be the same, and 22% saying the new year would be worse.'

Similar polling from the Public Opinion Foundation found that the Yeltsin era at this stage was considered the 'Dark Past.'[206] On the Chechen front, VTsIOM polling revealed that only 16% thought that the ongoing war in Chechnya was one of the 'Top 10 Most Important Events in the Year 2000.'[207] More specific polling from the Agency for Regional Political Research showed that '50% to 55%' believed there had been many casualties in Chechnya but the war should continue. This is against 26% who believed there had been too many casualties and that the war should be ended.[208] Fighting the war was still a high priority in Russian public opinion, even given the high casualty rate; they figures were only slightly below previously recorded polling data.

Even for the second war, as an overall trend, Russian public opinion was never progressively increasing in favour of war. Opinion polling reliably shows that support for war went steadily downwards except when something newly terrible happened, and then Putin in turn would play up his 'war on banditry' in the media and so support for war would rise again, but only temporarily before starting to drop again.

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[205] Hedlund, Stefan, 'Will the Russian Economy Revive Under Putin?' *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 48, No. 2, M.E. Sharpe Inc., March/April 2001, pp. 54-62.
[206] ROMIR and Public Opinion Foundation data collected from: Bashkirova, Elena and Petrenko, Elena, 'God optimista,' *Vremia novostei*, 27 Dekabr' 2000, http://www.vremya.ru/2000/195/19/4927.html.
[207] Data taken from: Levada, Yuri, 2000 god: razocharovaniia i nadezhdi' Issue 51, *Moskovskie novosti*, EastView, http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=140441.
[208] Data taken from: Popov, Nikolai, 'Songs of the Year,' *Novoe Vremia*, No. 52, 31 December 2000, p.17, *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, Vol. 53, No. 1, 31 January 2001, p. 4.

Therefore, as a general rule, increasing support for war was always sudden and reactive to changing events. Otherwise, support for the conflict was reliably decreasing.

Looking back on the overall trends, as Lev Gudkov of VTsIOM points out:

> '[...]in the end of October 2000, the number of supporters of peaceful negotiations with Chechen leaders first exceeded the number of supporters of active war action in the federal search against Chechen fighting formations: 46% agreeing against 44% with 10% having difficulty to answer.'[209]

Gudkov recognizes however that those who are not supporters of the war are the most politically disconnected, comprising women, the elderly, and inhabitants of outlying regions.

On a broader military scope, trends in public opinion towards the military in this time period seem to move downward because of other situations independent of the Chechen issue. As previously mentioned, tragedy struck Russia's military on 12 August 2000 with the sinking of the Kursk, Russia's premier 'flagship' submarine, during war games in the Barents Sea. Although this event had little direct bearing on the second Chechen war, it is useful to discuss this accident in the context of Russian public opinion in regard to the Russian military, of which much can be extrapolated in regard to this thesis.

According to a ROMIR Moscow poll at the time, where people were most informed about the tragedy due to having the most access to television mass media, Putin's approval rating dropped from 73% to 65%, a number that was still quite high. However, 59% of Russians held that 'the

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[209] Gudkov, Lev, 'Antimobilizatsionnyi potentsial rossiiskogo obshchestva,' VTsIOM, *Monitoring obchestvennogo mneniia*, No. 6, Vol. 50, Noiabr-Dekabr', p. 46.

loss of the submarine in no way affected their attitude towards the President.'[210] [211] Data such as this seem to agree that Putin is the type of President that the Russian people want, even in view of tragedy of this type.

Looking at the Chechen people, support for Maskhadov at this point was however maintained. Despite the promotion of Akhmad Kadyrov by Putin as a leader of Chechnya, few seem to have forgotten Maskhadov. Polls conducted in the region by the LAM Center between December 2000 and January 2001 suggested that 80% still supported Maskhadov and desired him to negotiate with Russia.[212]

As will be further elaborated in future chapters, connected to this are the new use of the word 'extremism' by the Russian government and media. In response to the frequent use of this word in media, Public Opinion Foundation decided to ask in a survey what Russians thought this word meant. A variety of responses were given, coming in first was the general response 'Aggressive methods of fighting', with 23% in Russia and 37% in Moscow.[213]

VTsIOM surveys in 2001 confirmed that Russian public opinion continued to put the blame for the explosions in Moscow and other cities in 1999 on the heads of various elements of the Chechen insurgence, particularly upon the Islamist elements of the conflict, despite all of the debate and arguments put forward in the intervening two years. 55% place blame on Basaev and

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[210] ROMIR, 'Moskvichi o tragedii na rossiiskoi podvodnoi lodke "Kursk",' 19-20 August 2000, Survey of 500 adult Moscovites, website: http://web.archive.org/web/20010306021902/www.romir.ru/socpolit/actual/08_2000/submarine.htm.

[211] Additional analysis, using same polling data, from Nikonov, Vyacheslav, 'A Political Tsushema,' *Trud*, 26 August 2000, http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/4482.html#7.

[212] 'Chechens Support Secular Government; Believe Maskhadov Government Should Represent Chechnya in Negotiations with Russians,' Dispatches from Chechnya, No.7, http://www.idee.org/lreport7.html.

[213] Open-ended question: 'How do you understand the word "Extremism", what does it mean?' Highest rating answers: (37%) Aggressive methods of fighting, (16%) Extreme expression of political views, (5%) General negative appraisal, (2%) Extreme situations, (2%) Achieving aims by any means, (1%) Non-standard responses, (1%) International conflicts, (39%) No response, wrong response. Polling data from Public Opinion Foundation, conducted 14-15 October 2000, 1500 respondents in 29 regions using household interviews: http://english.fom.ru/survey/dominant/6/15/53.html

his soldiers, 19% on Khattab and his people, and 6% place blame on Maskhadov. This makes for a combined 80% that believe, in August 2001, that some element of Chechen resistance planted bombs in Russian apartment blocks. Unlike in the first war, it is clear that, in the 1999 - 2002 period covered in this chapter, Chechen forces were unable to impress the Russian public with the possible 'futility of war' dogma there.[214]

More surveys by VTsIOM done at the time show that in the period of January 2001 to August 2001, approval ratings of Putin's activities as President maintained constantly between the levels of 72 and 76%. Prime Minister Kasyanov, rarely a central figure outside of the shadow of Putin, had approval ratings of 47 to 49%. Not surprisingly, the 'representatives' of the President have far lower approval ratings, hovering between 30 and 33%. When put against their unfavourable ratings in another part of the same survey, their mean approval rating dropped to, and at certain points below, zero.[215] These results continued the trend started in the last months of 1999, and lasting throughout 2000, reflecting high levels of constant polling support for a portrayed central 'purposeful democratic leader' such as Putin, as opposed to lower levels officials who inspire a far lower level of respect.

For the first time in 2001 however, some began to doubt their devotion to a one-party state, which had been a recurring theme in the Yeltsin era and the early Putin era. In regard to the overall political situation, Russian public opinion was not totally comfortable with one-party rule as was developing under the Putin administration through the Unity party. For the first time in VTsIOM yearly polling data, more Russians (41%) desired having two or three strong parties versus having one strong unified party (34%). This is as opposed to 1999, when 43% said they

[214] Data taken from: VTsIOM, 'Sotsial'no-politicheskaya situatiya v rossii v avguste 2001 g,' 2001, www.wciom.ru.
[215] Question: 'To what degree do you trust Putin?' Possible answers as to varying degrees of trust from Entirely trust to Entirely don't trust, VTsIOM, 1600 respondents, Jaunary 2001-August 2001, 'Sotsial'no-politicheskaya situatsiya v Rossii v avguste 2001 g', 2001, www.wciom.ru.

wanted to have one strong party, while 35% responded that they wanted two or three strong political parties.[216]

On a tangent perhaps descriptive of the Russian government, Yuri Levada, in an interview with *Vremia MN* in July 2001, professed his belief that Putin seems 'too concerned about what people think about him.' Even though he stated that people are disillusioned with the war, he believed that Putin had become a 'symbol of hope,' stating that 72% approve of Putin's performance no matter what. In the end, however, he believes that Putin 'has become a hostage to his popularity rating.'[217]

11 September 2001 was however a milestone not for the Chechen war, because very little changed in its prosecution, but for Putin's defence of his version of the necessity of war. In its aftermath, Putin was able to again argue his reasons for invading Chechnya, both domestically and internationally. Effects were however primarily international allowing Putin to fight off foreign criticism.

Russian public support for the war continued to drop gradually. From a peak around the third month of 2000, where those in favour of continuing military action in the region topped 70%, support for war dropped below 40% in August, where it held at a constant level with statistically insignificant changes of just above 41% in September 2001. Likewise, support for negotiations in Chechnya went from a low of around 22% in the third month of 2000, crossing the 50%

[216] Question: 'How many political parties, in your opinion, do you need right now in Russia?' Possible answers: 1) One strong right party 2) Two or three big parties 3) Many relatively small parties 4) We don't need political parties 5) Difficult to answer, VTsIOM, 1600 Russian respondents, 24-27 August 2001, 83 population centres, 33 regions, Press Report No. 25, 30 August 2001. http://www.wciom.ru/vciom/new/press

[217] Tokareva, Yelena, 'Vlast' ne interesuet nichevo, krome nee samoi,' Issue 120, *Vremia MN*, 13 July 2001, EastView, http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=2420131.

threshold in March 2001, then well over 50% in August 2001, only to fall again to close to 40% in late September.[218]

In December 2001 interviews published in January 2002, President Putin put down his views on the Chechen issue. In this interview, he agreed with the fact that the Khasavyurt Accords of 1996 granted Chechen independence, and that Russia could not be held responsible for trying to destroy the idea of Chechen independence. However, because Maskhadov and other forces in Chechnya failed to erect a viable and cohesive Chechen state in order to govern the region, Russia could not be held in a negative light for needing to establish government there according to Russian rules. The suggestion was that because Chechnya failed to establish a stable government, they then forfeited their right to independence.[219]

From public opinion polling data, simply to 'not calm down Chechnya,' was in fact the largest basis of unpopularity for Putin[220], even though, in another poll conducted at the same time, Russian public opinion was indicating that the issue of Chechnya seemed to be separating from the issue of Putin's popularity. A majority (59%) had answered in survey that Putin has never given them an occasion to be disappointed, while amongst those who were disappointed, only 3% of Russians believed the continuation of the war in Chechnya was a source of 'disappointment' in Putin.[221]

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[218] Question: 'How do you consider, right now should continue war activities in Chechnya or begin negotiations?' VTsIOM, Press Report No. 29, 22 October 2001, web site: http://www.wciom.ru/vciom/new/press. These surveys are of 1600 Russians, in 83 population centres in 33 regions of the country. See also: VTsIOM, VCIOM Press Ltd., No. 5, Sept-Oct 2001, p. 6.

[219] Jonsson, Anna, 'Is Putin Preparing the Ground for a 'Solution' to the Chechen Issue?,' Central Asia Caucasus Institute, 16 Jan. 2002, http://www.cacianalyst.org/view_article.php?articleid=50&SMSESSION=NO.

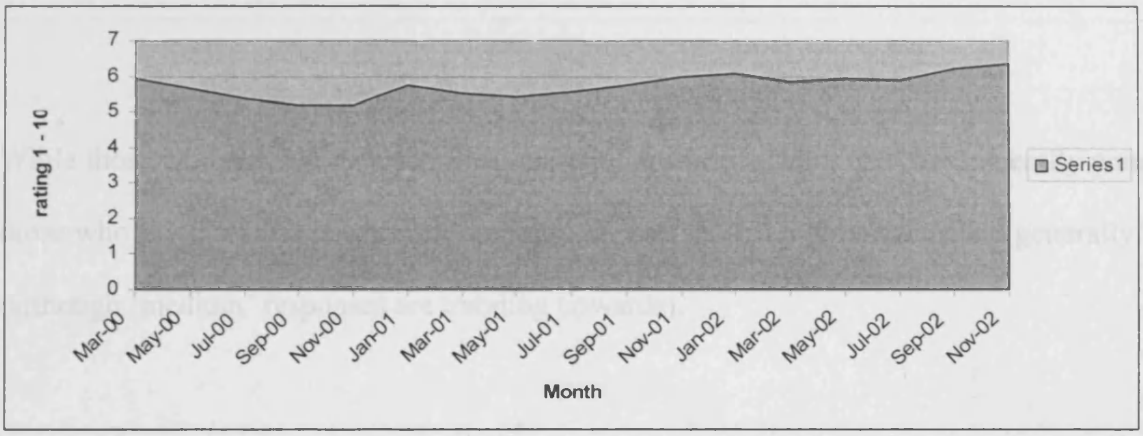
[220] Open-ended question: 'In what do you mainly consider, in the respondents' point-of view, the failures of Putin in the highest post?' 11% said 'no end' to the war in Chechnya, 5% criticized Putin's rapprochement with the West, 4% said the 'decrease in the standard of living,' and 2%said that the 'victory of corruption' and 'coping with criminality.' This survey was taken of 1500 respondents on 16 March 2002.
Petrova, A. S., 'The Main Failure of Putin – To Not Calm Down Chechnya,' Public Opinion Foundation, 21 Mar. 2004, http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/societas/Chechnya/putin_chechnya/of021102

[221] Respondents were asked when Putin had ever disappointed them, and if yes, then why? 59% said that Putin had never given them a reason to be disappointed in them. 26% said that there had been occasions of disappointment. 7% said that seeing Putin in Sochi during the Kursk tragedy disappointed them. 4% thought that Putin had not protected Russian athletes during the Salt Lake City Olympic Games, presumably referring to doping scandals

In regard to popular appraisals of Putin's performance as President, many of these trends continued in the year 2002, as seen from the graph below:

(Graph 9): [222]

*(In this graph, in rating Putin's performance between 1 and 10, 1 is the lowest response and 10 the highest)



Unlike in the Yeltsin era, economic status does not seem to be a contributing factor to the view of President Putin. Russian public opinion seems to continue to understand their families' material position to be roughly no better (albeit with no relatively slight but constant decline and with some differentiation) than in the pre-Putin era, as seen from the following graph:

(Graph 10):[223]

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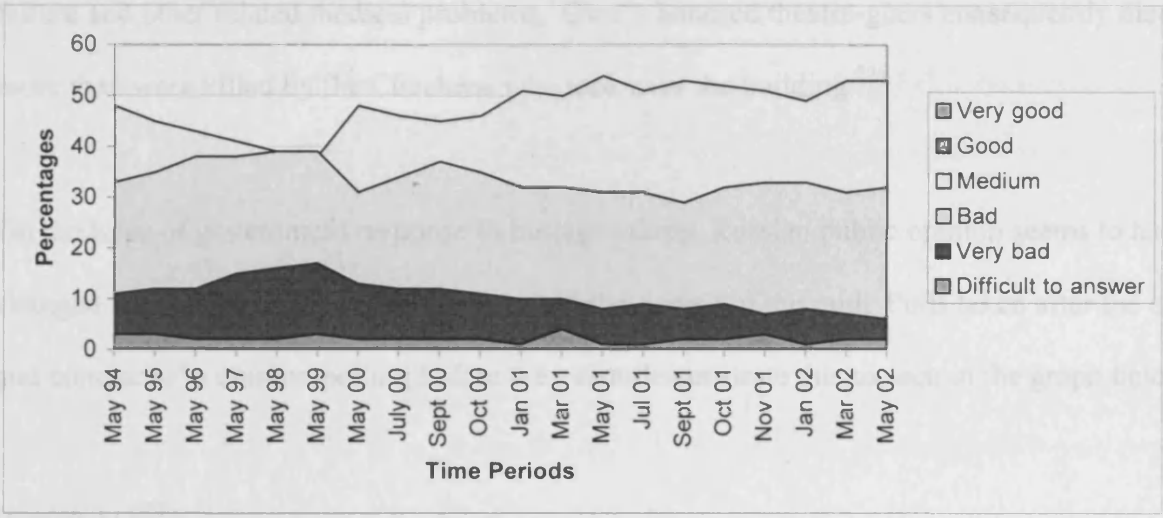
although this is not elaborated upon. 3% said continuing the war in Chechnya was a source of disappointment in Putin. 2% criticized Putin's pro-American foreign policies and 2% expected Putin to make greater social actions. 1% criticized Putin's refusal to judge Yeltsin. Public Opinion Foundation, 16 Mar. 2002, 1500 respondents. Petrova, A.S., 'When Did the President Disappoint Russians?' Public Opinion Foundation, 21 Feb. 2002, http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/societas/Chechnya/putin_chechnya/of021104

[222] Data from: 'Appraisals from President V. Putin's Performance,' VTsIOM, 2400 respondents. 'Russian Public Opinion 2002,' VTsIOM, Moscow, 2003, p. 24.

[223] Question: 'How do you rank in the current time the material position of your family?' Possible answers as in Graph 9, VTsIOM, Yearly polling data: May 1994 – May 1999, quarterly polling data: May 2000-October 2000, bi-monthly polling data: January 2001-May 2002, ~2107 respondents except in May 1994: 2975 respondents. VTsIOM, *Monitoring obchestvennogo mneniia*, Vol. 59, No. 3, May-Jun. 2002, p. 54.



While those who say that their families' material position is 'very bad' has generally gone down, those who say that their position is 'medium' or 'bad' is still highly erratic and generally high (although 'medium' responses are trending upwards).

Another interesting development of 2002 in regard to examining trends in Russian public opinion on the Chechen war is the Nord-Ost incident.

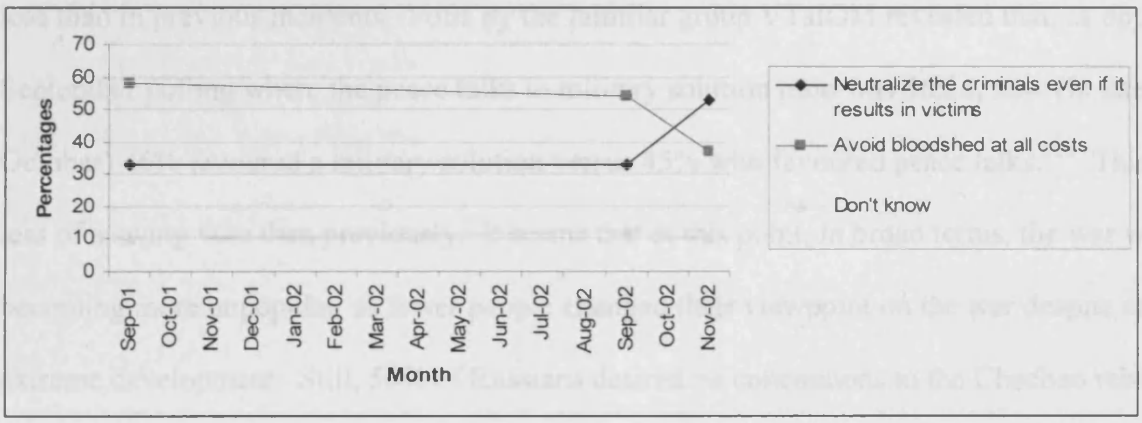
During a showing of the play 'Nord-Ost' on 23 October 2002, Chechen rebels burst in with guns, having bombs tied to their bodies, and took the audience hostage. The rebels' principle threat was that if the Russian forces stormed the building, then they would then blow up the building. Much different from Budyonnovsk, Russian FSB and OMON were quick on the scene and closed off the theatre (relative to past such situations) with relative speed. The crisis ended with the use of anesthetics to gas the entire building; putting most healthy people in the building to sleep before anyone could blow it up, then afterwards Russian forces burst in killing most of the rebels and arresting a few of the terrorists[224]. Many people who were not in top physical condition, children and the elderly, did not survive the use of gas, and they died from heart

[224] 'Dubrovka Theatre Siege,' *MN News*, http://www.mosnews.com/mn-files/dubrovka.shtml.

failure and other related medical problems. Over a hundred theatre-goers consequently died, far more than were killed by the Chechens who took over the building.[225]

On the issue of government response to hostage taking, Russian public opinion seems to have changed in response to the perceived successful outcome of the raid. Polls taken after the event and compared to opinion polling before the event demonstrate this as seen in the graph below:

(Graph 11):[226]



Reaction was initially very nervous among Russians during the standoff, with many asking how such terrorists could ever be allowed to do this sort of thing in downtown Moscow. 35% of Russians thought that the secret services were not in control of even the situation in Moscow, but only 15% related this to the Russian leadership. Ultimately, the conclusion to the theatre situation caused many Russians to breathe a sigh of relief and to regard such events as typical of the Chechens, and thereby support rose for the Russian government and the 'superb' work of the FSB. In the end, only 7% thought the Chechen situation should be re-considered again. The fact that far more people died in the audience from the use of gas, including the fact that Russian

[225] '...129 hostages died in the wake of the siege. All, but two of them died of gas poisoning.' 'Nord-Ost: A Year On,' *Gazeta.ru*, http://www.gazeta.ru/2003/10/23/NordOstayear.shtml

[226] Question: 'Now one can more and more often hear of terrorists taking hostages and demanding arms and money from the authorities. What do you think is the most important thing to do in such situations?' Possible answers according to Graph 10, VTsIOM, 1600 respondents, 'Russian Public Opinion 2002,' VTsIOM, Moscow, 2003, p. 81.

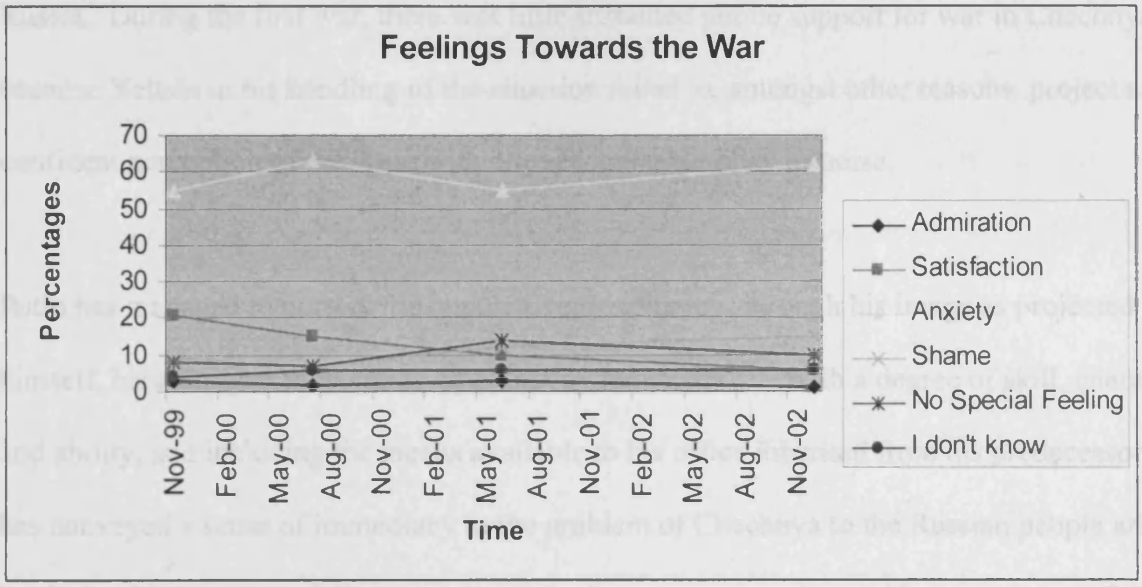
authorities failed to tell medical authorities what kind of gas was used (because it was a state 'secret') did not bother much of Russian public opinion. Many of the Russians I spoke to at the time professed that such casualties were the price that had to be paid to fight terrorism.[227] Also, the usual low opinion of competence in the Russian government allowed public opinion to dismiss such mistakes as typical of Russian life.

Support for the Chechen war also correspondingly rose in Russian public opinion, with more than half of respondents once again favouring a military solution, but this change was generally less than in previous incidents. Polls by the familiar group VTsIOM revealed that, as opposed to September polling where the peace talks to military solution ratio was 56:36, now (in late October) 46% favoured a military solution versus 45% who favoured peace talks.[228] This was less of a swing vote than previously. It seems that at this point, in broad terms, the war was becoming more unpopular, as fewer people changed their viewpoint on the war despite another extreme development. Still, 56% of Russians desired no concessions to the Chechen rebels and 77% approved of the President's performance.[229]

Long term polling data reveals trends supporting a sustained level of apprehension towards the Chechen war in Russian public opinion, as shown from the following graph:

(Graph 12):[230]

[227] The author was in Moscow at the time.
[228] Statistics for the two previous paragraphs came from Levada, Yuri, 'The War's Rating,' *New Times*, 01 December 2002, EastView, http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=4605477.
[229] *Ibid.*
[230] Question: 'What feelings does information about the operations of Russian troops in Chechnya arouse in you?' Possible answers as in Graph 11, 1600 respondents. 'Russian Public Opinion 2002,' VTsIOM, Moscow, 2003, p. 52.



This graph shows that, of the four choices, anxiety changes very little as the war continues. Russian public opinion throughout the time period studied of the second Chechen war has found that Russians have always been worried about the conflict, and this has served consistently to harden support for Putin.

Conclusions

In reference to the first point of the chapter introduction concerning predominant trends, Russian public opinion on the Chechen wars, a recurring theme in all sections of this chapter is that, when polling data is examined, Russian public opinion did not sustain support for a war in Chechnya. Support for war decreases inexorably over time, and the extent is connected parallel to the level of initial support for war.

There is however difference in the regard of each war in regard to these themes.[231] The Russian public during these time periods preferred in general a 'stronger hand' in the governance of

[231] Hereon is in reference to the second point of the chapter introduction, as to what these trends say about the wider political context of Russia.

Russia. During the first war, there was little sustained public support for war in Chechnya because Yeltsin in his handling of the situation failed to, amongst other reasons, project a confident perception of the issue with any recognizable level of poise.

Putin has managed to portray the opposite representation, through his image as projected by himself, his administration and to an extent by the media[232]. With a degree of skill, character and ability, and including the means available to his office inherited from his predecessor, Putin has conveyed a sense of immediacy to the problem of Chechnya to the Russian people and he has been able to successfully argue that he is the strong man who is able to take care of this issue.

Further to this, Russian public opinion has followed this theme and has been apprehensively supportive of Putin's policy on Chechnya, while not necessarily being in favour of the Chechen war specifically. These trends find that the wars in Chechnya demonstrate the personality driven nature of Russian politics. While it is true that both Yeltsin and Putin have been elected to the office of President of Russia, both have been, over time, hindered and assisted by their policies on the Chechen issue. Of course, it must also be pointed out that the war in Chechnya was in many ways an artificial construct (as a policy) began by Yeltsin for short-term political gains, outside of a smooth, more peaceful, theoretical transition from communism to democracy, although the sought-after political rewards were not felt for many years.

Yeltsin wanted a war to boost patriotism and support for the Russian state and for his administration. However, the remuneration for this policy only went to his successor, that of the government of Putin and his 'strong state' idea. Very few of these concepts, it must be added, contribute positively to the idea of Russian democracy.[233]

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[232] As to be discussed in particularly chapter four.
[233] As to be discussed in chapter five.

The next chapters will seek to examine these trends in light of such factors of regionalism, social cleavages and media influence, including government policy on dealing with media. Ultimately, there will be a further exploration of what these outlined trends reflect on the state of Russian politics as authoritarianism or as consolidating democracy.

Jason Vaughn

Chapter Three

Regional, Social and Other Cleavage Differences: Russian Public Opinion and the Chechen Wars

Introduction

The previous chapter outlined trends in Russian public opinion on the two Chechen wars 1994-96 and 1999-2002 over the entire territory of the Russian Federation. This chapter is written to outline variations of Russian public opinion in regard to the Chechen war in separate cleavages of Russian society.

The central questions here are, given what source material and data that is available:

- What can we learn about who did typically support the use of Russian Federal troops in Chechnya, and who in turn was typically opposed?
- Especially, in the Putin era, a further question will frequently dominate also: what groups are even interested in the Chechen war as a 'problem' in Russian society?
- Ultimately, this chapter will attempt to find out how unified Russian public opinion is on the Chechen war issue.

Covering the largest amount of territorial land mass on Earth, the contemporary Russian Federation is an attempt at a federal state comprising 86 constituent subjects. Regard for one of these subjects, Chechnya, and for its traditional/native people, the Chechen nation, are among the main focuses of this thesis. The simple facts of the issue have already been discussed. In 1991,

Chechnya sought to break away from the Russian Federation. In 1994, Russia attempted mass invasion to prevent this 'subject' from full secession. Both before and after this point, Russian public opinion has to an extent formed and diversified on the issue.

Military operations in Chechnya have been initiated under two separate Russian presidential administrations. As covered in chapter two, each of the two administrations responsible for conduct of the wars in Chechnya has taken on different public perceptions in the Russian public as pertaining to this subject. One could theorize that Russian public opinion is far from being uniform over the expanse of Russia's territory, and within its ethnic, age, or class divides. This chapter does not however seek to lineally explain cleavages in Russian public opinion over the entire periods being studied. Many times the Putin era will be concentrated on, while showing appropriate contrasts to the Yeltsin era when reliable data is available. In regard to many points, it is often found that some cleavages, especially in the political sphere, are still forming.

On the other hand, some cleavages are more fundamental, such as on gender, age, and the like. This chapter seeks to better understand the war from the examination of a number of these cleavages, defining some divisions simultaneously with analysis.

To a degree, this chapter seeks to explore the cleavages within the larger examination conducted in chapter two. Also, however, this chapter will attempt to expand on the contemporary understanding of Russian public opinion, in some cases far beyond what data on Russian public opinion can tell us. Such research is important in that it adds to academic knowledge on the subject of Russian public opinion, Russian society, the Chechen wars, and even our understanding of Russian democracy. To accurately explore and distinguish between cleavages in Russian public opinion on the Chechen wars is to challenge abstract generalities made by some in study of the future of Russia as a state, as a culture, and as a progressive society.

As will be discussed in each appropriate section, this chapter poses some questions that go beyond the limits of this thesis. It could be argued that in some areas this chapter might present more questions than answers or conclusions than are possible to maintain reliably based on available research and polling data. In such cases, the topic will be hinted at, but the line of discussion will not be followed.

In this chapter I will look at eight cleavages in Russian public opinion in order to attempt to find boundaries of importance in each. In each of these cases, there will also be discussed what has already been researched regarding each area. Ultimately, this chapter will try to reflect on who in Russian public opinion supports the war in Chechnya. Again, in many cases due to lack of evidentiary data, few conclusions will be found, however there should be a study of these cleavages in order to better understand Russian public opinion on the issue of the Chechen wars.

The eight cleavages are:

1) The Ethnic Divide
2) The Gender Divide
3) The Age Divide
4) The Rural/Urban Divide
5) The Regional Divide
6) The Political Divide
7) The Class Divide
8) The Religious Divide

With that said, we must now consider the relevant divisions covered.

The Ethnic Divide

The ethnic divide in Russian society has been a prevalent part of debate since long before the beginning of the post-Soviet Chechen wars. Russia's present has been dominated by the legacies of the role of the primarily ethno-Russian empire and how a democratic state could evolve from a traditionally centralized and almost-exclusively authoritarian past. Whether by monarchic czar, by communist political party, or by democratic representation, Russia has long had to deal with extending centralized rule from St. Petersburg/Moscow (capitals of all the three eras) over other ethnicities which have not always been open to external rule.

Within this environment of the post-Soviet era, Chechnya stubbornly refused to join the Russian Federation, even when other ethno-sections were willing to make a deal. As befitting their tradition, post-Soviet Chechnya under Dzhokhar Dudaev at the very least made the point clear that, if Chechnya were to join Russia, then it would join on its own terms.

In some ways, Russian society saw this policy as a rebellion against Moscow in the context of the still-existing stereotypes of Chechens. Soviet rule had not been able to prevent ethnicity from being a substantial ongoing factor in Soviet society, and this has continued into the post-Soviet era.

In the context of this chapter, a study of the ethnic divisions within Russian public opinion in view of the Chechen wars is extremely difficult. As expressed by Valentin Mikhailov:

'In recent years there has been an acute lack of independent public opinion polls and sociological research in the republics. It became virtually impossible to receive reliable information in Chechnya after the military campaign started.'[234]

However, Dimitry Gorenburg wrote a substantial article on this subject concerning popular support for nationalism in Russia's ethnic republics. In this paper, Gorensburg compares support for nationalism in Russia's ethnic republics to nationalism among ethnic groups not possessing their own republic. Gorenburg finds that:

'[...]local political leaders support nationalism primarily because they recognize that greater regional autonomy would increase their political power. Since cultural nationalism does not affect these leaders' power, they do not have a strong tendency to support it.'[235]

In this context, as in Chechnya, ethnic nationalism has been used sometimes to gain power when regional lines reflected these divisions, whereas simply cultural nationalism (outside of political boundaries) was not sufficient. This could be one argument whereby the rise of Chechen nationalism in their own republic did not expand to a larger North Caucasian arena.

Also, Gorenburg finds that:

'[...]results show a strong tendency among intellectuals in most republics to support regional separatism. Students and members of the political elite also tend to support regional separatism in most republics. There is an extremely strong correlation between

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[234] Mikhailov, Valentin, 'Chechnya and Tatarstan: Differences in Search of an Explanation,' Chechnya: From Past to Present, (ed.) Richard Sakwa, Anthem Press, London, 2005, p. 57.
[235] Gorenburg, Dmitry, 'Nationalism for the Masses: Popular Support for Nationalism in Russia's Ethnic Republics,' *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 1, January 2001, p. 102. (pp. 73-104)

level of education and support for separatism, with higher education predicting greater separatist tendencies in 14 of the 18 cases.'[236]

Further:

'[...]results show that support for cultural nationalism is most pronounced among intellectuals, rural inhabitants and migrants from rural to urban areas. Belonging to the intellectual group increases a respondent's language index scored by 2.3%, while being a migrant increases it by 8.8%. Women and communists are particularly likely to express opposition to cultural nationalism.'[237]

Where these conclusions parallel study of Russian public opinion, it is interesting in that, concerning a debate about ethnic divisions in Russian society, how much difference there is between priorities of public opinion within ethnicities and the priorities of general Russian public opinion. As will be shown, in comparing such studies, little analysis can be drawn, other than to say that regional separatism is a distinct issue in ethnic republics; whereas considerations of such issues in the ethnic Russian mindset represent a more-relatively foreign concept. Most probably it is because of a carryover from the traditional imperial mindset that, in data used for this chapter, such concerns of ethnicity have little bearing on the Russian mind outside the boundaries of certain security issues and stereotypes.

In relation to the degree to which the Russian state has attempted a policy on nationalities in order to address the ethnicity question, results have not been positive. This can be seen from the situation and oppression of Chechens covered in this thesis, however individual rights for minorities have been a professed goal of general policy. This has represented a substantial

[236] *Ibid*, p. 92.
[237] *Ibid*, p. 101.

advance in Russian society. Referring to the 1992 Federation Treaty, Tamara Reslar describes this significance as:

> '[...]the treaty called for the recognition of the human rights of all citizens, regardless of their nationality or where they live, as well as the right of peoples to self-determination. However, it stressed that the rights and liberties of individuals-a new emphasis in Russia's politics-are paramount.'[238]

As in the past, however, ethnic policy on this question has fallen behind the idealistic words of any treaty. The Chechen war, as outlined in this thesis, is endemic with a general lack of equality or 'self-determination' as suggested by most of Russia's treatises and constitutions.

In generalized polling data, very little data is found to be available concerning what any one ethnic section of Russian society thinks about Chechens or of the Chechen war, as very few surveys ask the question, 'What is your ethnicity?' Most survey data found concerning Russian society is therefore in the 'rossiiane' context and not in that of the 'russkie.' In the absence of polling data as referred to by Mikhailov and in agreement with research for this thesis, instead this section will seek to examine the ethnic divide in the context of how Chechens have been viewed by Russian society during the time periods studied.

Mary Holland finds that, in the second war in Chechnya:

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[238] Reslar, Tamara J., 'Dilemmas of Democratisation: Safeguarding Minorities in Russia, Ukraine, and Lithuania, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 1, January 1997, p. 95. (pp. 89-106)

'[...]although Chechens have long encountered racial discrimination and harassment in Russia, since the resumption of armed conflict in 1999, racial discrimination has evolved into a state-sponsored, large-scale coordinated campaign.'[239]

While this statement is slightly extreme on policy, especially on the 'large-scale coordinated' section based on 'racist' statements and records by Russian officials and also the Western-oriented NGO reports she uses to document this 'discrimination,' some analysis should be examined on this point. The question of, to what extent is Chechen discrimination an artificially created concept by the state in the second war, will be debated in the next chapter on the media but the reality of discrimination is the point of this section.

Furthermore, it must be said that this topic has already been extensively explored by the work of John Russell in his substantive article, 'Mujahedeen, Mafia, Madmen: Russian Perceptions of Chechens During the Wars in Chechnya, 1994-96 and 1999-2001.' Russell focuses his discussion on the 'demonisation' of Chechens in Russian public opinion.

He finds that the dehumanization of Chechens as a people by Russian media and elites combined with the 'slightly ridiculous posturing, megalomania and illusions of grandeur' among 'leading Chechen protagonists' has created an atmosphere where compromise is increasingly difficult, if not impossible in the second war. In reference to the first war, Russell finds that the Chechen rebels were able to essentially communicate their message better, thereby:

'[...]there was a growing understanding among the Russian public that Chechens perceived their struggle as one of national liberation.'[240]

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[239] Holland, Mary, 'Chechnya's Internally Displaced and the Role of Russia's Non-Governmental Organizations,' *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 2004, p. 337. (pp. 334-346)

Any ethnic divide was overcome therefore in the first war by the actions and pronouncements of Chechen insurgents and their external supporters, effectively forcing open communication, whereas in the second war, the Chechen 'mindset' has not broken through, and utilizing a smarter public relations campaign, Putin has been able to dilute any impact of Chechen PR. Further, due to a somewhat more successful institution of a pro-Russian government in Chechnya, Putin has been able to partially break the clear paradigms of an ethnic divide within the Chechen conflict.

Russell explains this divide specifically on the basis of the American September 11 attacks in his article, 'Terrorists, Bandits, Spooks and Thieves: Russian Demonisation of the Chechens Before and Since 9/11.' Russell points out the diversion between the romanticism placed on the Chechens by Western sources, who marvel at the 'perception of the freedom loving, savage yet brave and honourable Chechens,'[241] and Russian public opinion, which keeps in mind the hostility of Chechens to Russian rule. If any romanticism did exist in Russian public opinion, Russell found that it easily gave way a harsher view in the post-Soviet era.

Any existing good will in Russian public opinion on the ethnic divide therefore gave way to a progressively darker stereotype of Chechens, in an era where:

> '[...]the Chechen mafia, established in the major Russian cities, was well placed to exploit the opportunities afforded by the post-Soviet transition to a market economy.'[242]

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[240] Russell, John, 'Mujahedeen, Mafia, Madmen: Russian Perceptions of Chechens During the Wars in Chechnya, 1994-96 and 1999-2001,' Russia After Communism, (eds.) Rick Fawn and Stephen White, Frank Cass Publishers, London and Portland OR, 2002, pp. 76-80. (pp. 73-96)

[241] Russell, John, 'Terrorists, Bandits, Spooks and Thieves: Russian Demonisation of the Chechens Before and After 9/11,' *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 2005, p. 102. (pp. 101- 116)

[242] *Ibid*, p. 104.

On Yeltsin's attempt at turning this ethnic divide into support for the war, Russell finds that most of the Russian population accepted this only as 'hollow rhetoric,' using public opinion polling to demonstrate this statement. In contrast to the Yeltsin era, taking acknowledgement of this portrayal, Russell finds that this element found traction in Russian public opinion after the bombings in Russia in 1999.

This thesis, in further study of this issue, finds this to be essentially true. Research suggests that the 1999 explosions in Russia's apartment blocks brought the conflict in Chechnya 'home' for many Russians. The extension of the first war into places such as Budyonnovsk was not enough to make the danger of the conflict sufficiently 'immediate' for the Russian public as a broad security threat. Especially given the fact that at the time, many Russians did not perceive the situation in Chechnya as being an 'on-going' conflict, the apartment bombings seemed to destroy completely any potential sympathy for Chechen rebels available in 1999.

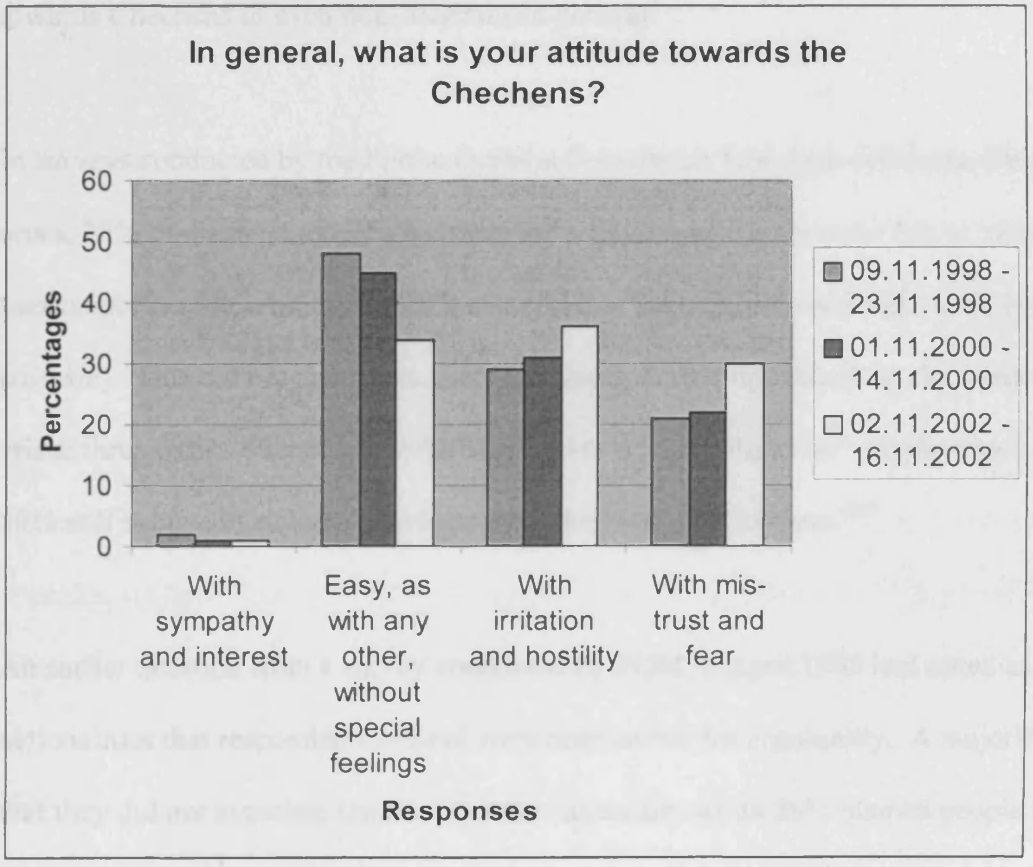
On the subject of the 11 September 2001 attacks, Russell emphasizes how Putin was able to further establish this 'immediacy' of the conflict. Much as the American president Bush used the attacks to pursue a more extensive foreign policy, Putin used this event to further his own interests in what fewer questioned was now Russia's internal policy: a pro-Russian victory in the Chechen conflict. Putin's successful demonisation of the Chechens on his own basis was further cemented. Nevertheless, Russell demonstrates that, to an extent, Putin's Chechnya policy, his rise to power on that issue and his augmentation of his portrayal of the conflict based on current events was a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Therefore, on the Chechen war as an ethnic issue, even if the situation was not necessarily what Putin said it was in the beginning, then circumstances brought Putin's portrayal into reality after the fact. Outside the realm of this thesis, Putin's future policies of 'Chechenisation' of the

conflict leading to support for the Kadyrovs was perhaps some representation of the unacceptable nature of long-term 'demonisation' of Chechens as an ethnic group.

Unsurprisingly, data studied for the purposes of this thesis seem to confirm that especially with the onset of the second war, Russian regard for Chechens as an ethnic group has lessened noticeably, as seen from the graph below:

(Graph 1):[243]



Not unsurprisingly in these surveys each taken two years apart, the ethnic divide seems to be a central focus on which Russian public opinion has variance if you consider the issue of the Chechen war.

[243] Question: 'In general what is your attitude towards the Chechens?' Possible answers as in Chart 1. VTsIOM, *Monitoring of Economic and Social Changes in Russia*, Series 1998-11, 2000-11, 2002-11, Surveys taken of 2409, 2402 and 2106 respondents respectively. http://sofist.socpol.ru.

In a similar survey conducted in 2000 by the Institute for Multi-Disciplinary Social Studies (Russian Academy of Sciences), 61% of respondents said that they felt "antipathy" towards Chechens versus 16% who said that they felt "sympathy." A further 22% said that the question was difficult to answer.[244]

Comparatively, in the first war, even in surveys conducted before and after the Budyonnovsk crisis, Russian public opinion seemed to be trending less towards a clear negative attitude towards Chechens or even non-Russians in general.

In surveys conducted by the Public Opinion Foundation four days before the Budyonnovsk crisis, 23% of those polled believed that the problems of Russia were due to 'non-Russian' (*nerusskie*) people. A majority 60% thought that the problems of Russia were due to 'Russians' (*russkie*). This did not change as much as expected after the assault on the hospital and ensuing crisis; three weeks afterwards, 26% blamed Russia's problems on 'non-Russian' people while 50% still believed that such problems were the fault of 'Russians.'[245]

An earlier question from a survey conducted by FOM in April 1995 had asked as to what nationalities that respondents believe were responsible for criminality. A majority (56%) said that they did not associate criminality with nationality while 26% blamed people living in the Caucasus. Although this might seem a large percentage blaming the Caucasians, it is rather

[244] Question: 'To what extent do you feel sympathy or antipathy towards the people of different nationalities? – the Chechens' Possible answers: 1) I experience sympathy 2) I experience antipathy 3) Difficult to answer 4) Refuse to answer. 1948 respondents nationwide, originally there were 2054 respondents, but 5% refused to answer, and they are removed in the statistics given above. http://sofist.socpol.ru.

[245] Exact question not given. Data from Public Opinion Foundation, July 1995, 1369 respondents, http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/societas/Chechnya/chechenian/of19952803.

small relative to the 66% in the above graph reflecting data from 1998 to 2002 that associated Chechens with irritation, hostility, mistrust and fear.[246]

While acknowledging here the lack of a clear comparison, it is obvious that during the first war, the Russian public had not yet found its own place in the world, and still largely was dealing with de-imperialization and the decision as to what 'Russia' would be. By the time of the ongoing second war in Chechnya, Russian public opinion had agreed with the strong state as proclaimed by Putin, and therefore had found a platform for itself from which to begin to potentially blame non-Russians for the problems of Russia.

Nevertheless, my own research has found that Chechens as an ethnic group received also a certain level of fairness. Through many of the interviews conducted for this thesis,[247] I often found a tolerance of, and magnanimity towards, the Chechen conflict some might find surprising. Ethnic Russian people, I generally found, thought the conflict was against terrorism and disorder in the abstract sense. They saw Putin as a strong leader, and they liked this characteristic. Asked about any damage to their freedoms, they often were more interested in the freedom to live life and make money, which could be considered fair in consideration of the history of Russia.

In May of 2006, one friend of mine, Vladimir, when asked about the ethnic-Chechen Russian army officer who lived next door to him, vouched for the officer's loyalty to Russia in the same conversation that he voiced his own support for the war. When asked to comment on the possibility that there existed a stereotype that Russians in any way could be generally racist towards Chechens, he could only laugh and swear that no such thing was true.

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[246] Question: 'As you believe, what representatives of nationalities more often than others do bad acts or crimes?' Possible answers: 1) I do not consider that bad acts or crimes should be connected to a nationality 2) inhabitants of the Caucasus 3) Inhabitants of Central Asia 4) Russians 5) Ukrainians 6) Jews 7) Other nationalities 8) Difficult to answer. April 1995, 1370 respondents. http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/societas/nation/caucasian/of19951507.

[247] Interviews conducted during multiple research visits to Russia between 2001 and 2006 for this purpose.

Another interview with an army officer I met near metro station Universitet in Moscow found many of the same characteristics. This officer, a major, told about how he had just returned from having a tour of duty in Chechnya. After giving me a picture of himself with a Russian Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC), he went on to almost boast about the massive numbers of Chechens that he had massacred. Jokingly, he started comparing the smell of burning bodies to the smells of other foods, such as (predictably) chicken. In his stories, he told me he was looking forward to his return to Chechnya. When asked however what his opinion of Chechens in general was, he was generally quite philosophical, stating that they more or less seemed ok. While it must be said that he was far from being without his own racial stereotyping, I was surprised at how he saw his enemies as not 'Chechens' but as 'terrorists.'

The older people I interviewed were generally more 'anti-Chechen' than the younger age groups. I was in Moscow during the Nord-Ost incident, and by and large, it was the older babushkas that were most willing to call the hostage-takers 'Chechens,' as opposed to 'the terrorists.' This is the case despite the fact that, at least initially, few knew the nationalities of any of the people inside, either hostages or hostage-takers.

To summarize, as detailed by Russell, Russian public opinion did perceive Yeltsin's use of the ethnic card as 'hollow rhetoric.' From the events of 1999 however, the ethnic divide gained a measure of perceived truth as Russians blamed Chechens as a nationality for terrorist acts. Although as said before it is probably not as clear as the wide, 'state-sponsored,' notion that Mary Holland suggested, this change is perhaps aided by some media policies of the Putin administration, as to be covered in chapter four.

The Gender Divide

In the context of this section, the centre of attention will be on the status and voice of women and how they compare to the opinions of men. As in many countries, viewpoints of women in Russia are given an undeserved somewhat-lesser status traditionally accorded their gender. Although there were efforts in the Soviet era to have gender equality in various areas, many of the fruits of these policies (if they were ever successful in the first place) have receded in the post-Soviet era, and so at present Russian women are many times given unequal standing and voice.

In the post-Soviet era, as detailed by Vladimir Shlapentokh, gender equality has regressed substantially. '80% of the unemployed are women' and 'sexual harassment of women [at their work] by their superiors is the norm.'[248] Ultimately, Shlapentokh finds that gender equality has gone in the opposite direction from the West in the last 30 years.

Nevertheless, on frequent occasions and for obvious reasons, women have frequently been the most vocal opponents of both Chechen wars. In what is Russia's civil society, mothers of soldiers sent to Chechnya are often the sources of much opposition to the conflict, and indeed are, according to James Richter, one of the most active forces in all Russian civil society.[249] Female journalists such as Anna Politkovskaya have risked their lives to collect information on the war and then write articles and books on the issue. Yet, does this reflect out on what sources we have of examining Russian public opinion and the Chechen war? This section seeks to further explore this topic.

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[248] Shlapentokh, Vladimir, 'Social Inequality in Post-Communist Russia: The Attitudes of the Political Elite and the Masses (1991-1998)', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 7, 1999, p. 1174. (pp. 1167-1178)
[249] Richter, James, 'Promoting Civil Society? Democracy Assistance and Russian Women's Organizations,' *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 49, No. 1, January-February 2002, pp. 30-41.

Amy Caiazza, in her book on gender and civil society in contemporary Russia, finds that women in Russia have a unique platform from which to attempt to influence military policy. She writes that:

> 'In fact, through a comparison of a men's group (ARA) [Antimilitarist Radical Association] and a women's group (CSM) [Committee of Soldiers' Mothers], it is argued that CSM's success was largely attributable to its ability to exploit a crucial resource that men did not have: a gender identity that could inspire and justify collective political activism.'[250]

Further to this, Caiazza finds that women's groups such as the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers have an advantage over men's groups. The Committee can for instance use their status as mothers to go to further extremes in opposition (while being non-violent) as compared to men's groups who focus on such abstract ideals as anti-militarism. These extremes could include 'the onslaught of mothers to Chechnya and to Russian military bases' to 'claim their sons.'[251] Exactly on this point, the Committee's 'most dramatic efforts to influence policy occurred as part of its opposition to the war in Chechnya.'[252]

Indeed, in separate FOM polling from the first war found for this thesis, 75% of respondents approved of the actions of the Russian mothers in claiming their sons.[253]

There is another angle however to this argument. The Committee was to an extent a unique group in attempting to influence military policy. Other women's groups based on more feminist

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[250] Caiazza, Amy B., Mothers and Soldiers: Gender, Citizenship and Civil Society in Contemporary Russia, Routledge, New York and London, 2002, p. 117.
[251] *Ibid*, p. 127.
[252] *Ibid*, p. 133.
[253] Question: 'Do you approve of the actions of the mothers of Russian soldiers who aspire to take away their sons from the sections which are at war in Chechnya?' Possible answers: 1) Yes 2) No 3) Difficult to answer, Public Opinion Foundation, January 1995, 1353 respondents. http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/az/%C2/Chechnya/army_chechnya__/of19950404.

ideals did not have as much persuasive power. As Caiazza finds, the Committee had more impact because they were mothers, and not only because they were women.[254] This is shown further by the Committee's ineffectual protest actions at the beginning of the second war.[255] Russian political leaders were able to better argue the necessity of continued conflict in Chechnya in 1999 and 2000, thereby to a degree blunting some of the impact of the Mothers' group.

Russian culture was extremely sympathetic to collective action by mothers, but only when the war was by nature unpopular. This is the case especially in analysis of sympathy for women as a general rule.

In the first war, there are a number of reports on Russian public opinion that shows a distinct difference in opinion on the war between men and women. For instance, a poll by Public Opinion Foundation found that women were less harsh on soldiers refusing to follow orders in Chechnya than men. While 53% of overall respondents in January of 1995 viewed positively the refusal of some officers and soldiers in the first war to follow some orders, 24% viewed this negatively. However, men were far more likely to view the refusal to follow orders negatively than women, 35% to 14%.[256]

At least in some ways initially, this is the case also in the second war. However as demonstrated below, the gender divide has evened out slightly except in some crisis situations. Data on the second war is more extensive, and so therefore, more details can be examined within the second conflict time period.

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[254] Caiazza, Amy B., Mothers and Soldiers: Gender, Citizenship and Civil Society in Contemporary Russia, p. 128.
[255] *Ibid*, p. 141.
[256] Question: 'Some Russian military, private soldiers as well as generals, have refused to carry out orders during the military operation in Chechnya. How do you estimate this behaviour?' Possible answers: 1) Positively 2) Negatively 3) Difficult to answer. FOM, January 1995, 1367 respondents.
http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/societas/Chechnya/of19950504.

In VTsIOM studies of the beginning of the second war in their *Express* series, data is broken down according to gender, and that makes the results rather useful in this section. VTsIOM terms as doves or 'golubei' those who respond to questions as to what should be done next in Chechnya with the answer, 'immediately terminate all war actions and begin negotiations with Chechen leaders.' Likewise, VTsIOM considers those who answer after a second question suggesting the possibility of major casualties with the response, 'terminate war actions and negotiate only if continuing the war effort will lead to a major loss of federal troops' as being weak hawks, or 'slabykh iastrebov.'[257]

Data is from there broken down into what cleavages respond with these answers. Those who answer with these responses are, in these surveys, decidedly in the minority; those who say the war should continue at all costs have a sizable lead on these two groups, but to breakdown into who has specifically these answers according to gender is repeatedly quite interesting on its own.

Analysis at this point will not focus on those who support the war in all circumstances, but instead on those who oppose the war in all circumstances and those who support the war only up to a point where considerable resources will have been perceived to be lost. Since those who supported the war versus those who opposed have already been examined in chapter two,

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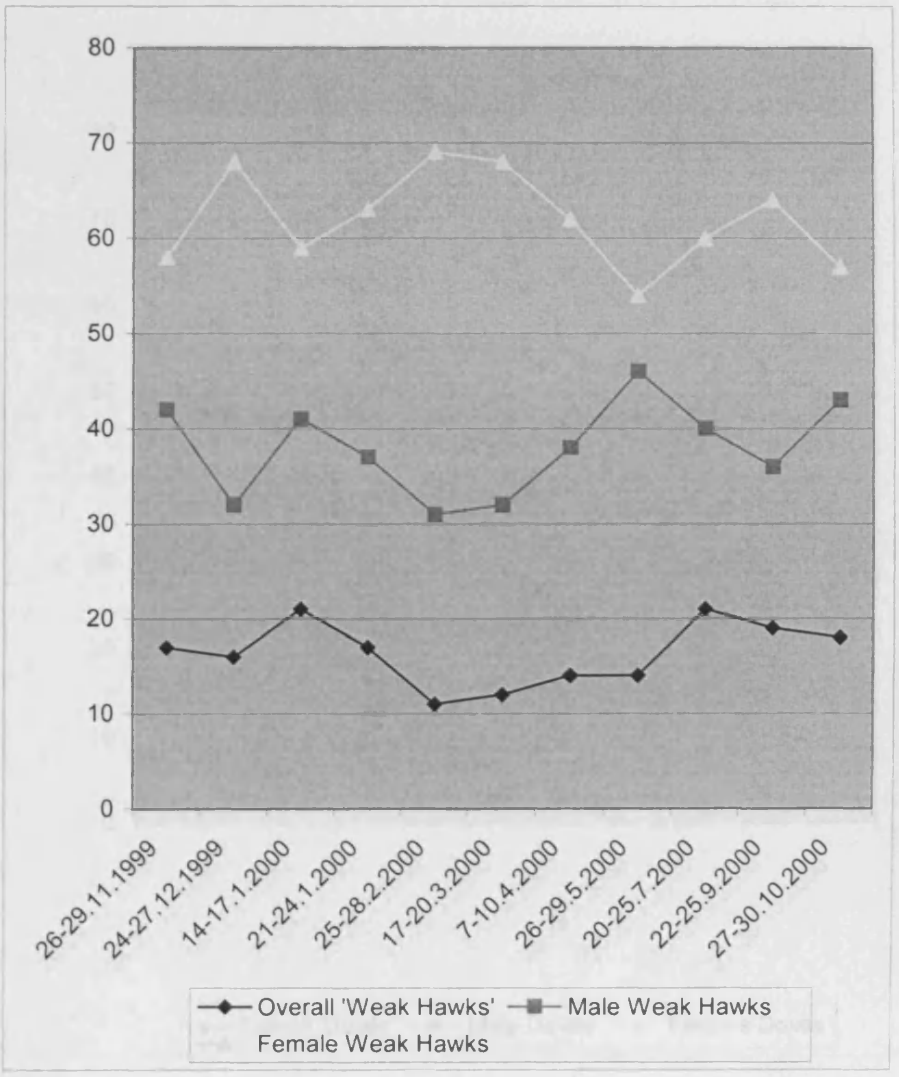
[257] Data from the following two graphs reflect responses to a group of questions asked of respondents in sequence. The 'overall' line represents 100% and the other lines represent the percentage of the overall proportion of weak hawks formed by males and females. Question 1: 'Do you think the offensive operation of Federal troops in Chechnya should continue or peace negotiations with the leaders of Chechnya should start?' Possible answers: 1) Continue the approach of Federal troops 2) Enter into negotiations with Chechen leadership 3) Difficult to answer. The data in Graph 3 reflects those who answered with number 2 from this question. Those who answered with Answers 1 or 3 were asked a second question. Follow-up question: 'And if the troops continue to suffer heavy losses in the offensive operation, do you think that the offensive operation should nevertheless continue in Chechnya, or in this case it would be necessary to start peace talks with the leaders in Chechnya?' Possible answers: 1) Continue the approach of Federal troops 2) Enter into negotiations with Chechen leadership 3) Difficult to answer. The data in Graph 2 reflects those who answered with Answer 2 in the follow-up question. The implication is that those who answered with answer 1, to continue the war operation no matter the cost, are considered 'strong hawks' as opposed to the 'weak hawks' as designated. In this survey data, respondents were also separated by gender. VTsIOM surveys are on average of 1600 respondents with fewer answering the follow-up question. Data from: VTsIOM Express Polls 1999-16,1999-21, 2000-3, 2000-4, 2000-9. 2000-13, 2000-15, 2000-16, 2000-18, 2000-21, 2000-22. http://sofist.socpol.ru/. See also: *Monitoring obchestvennogo mneniia*, VTsIOM, No. 6, Vol. 50, Noiabr'-Dekabr' 2000, p. 49, table 2.

examination here will concentrate on differences in those who at some point oppose the war. Graph two here first examines those so-called 'weak hawks,' or those who say that there is a point where their support would end for the war.

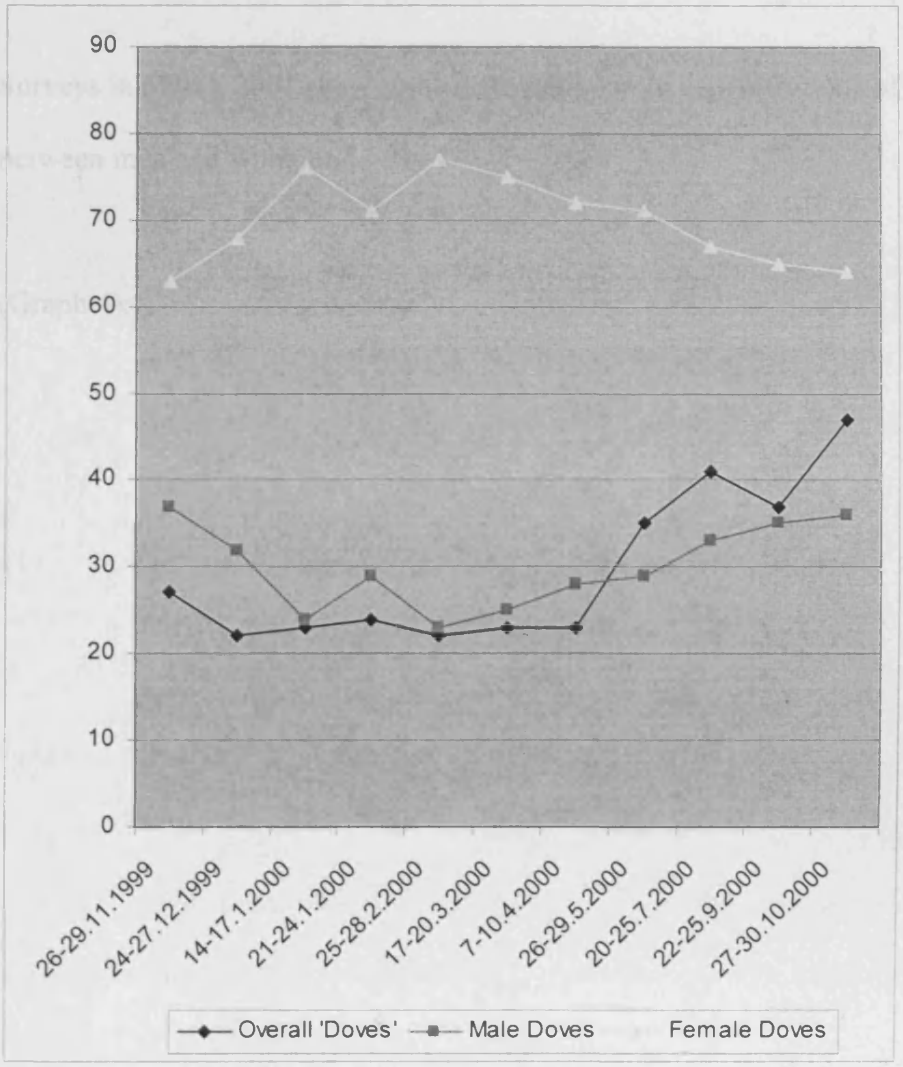
(Graph 2):



As shown by their generally higher percentages in relation to the male percentages of 'weak hawks,' this graph shows that many times, even if they agree to operations in Chechnya, then if there are major casualties, then often women are the first to agree to negotiations. Also data here shows that the periods of time when the overall percentage goes up tends to correspond with a

closing of the gap between male and female percentages. This is with the exception of the 5.2000 to 7.2000 time period where the overall percentage increases alongside a widening gap dominated by the percentage of female weak hawks.

(Graph 3):



Compared to the previous graph, as can be seen from this graph, women make up the majority of respondents considering themselves to be 'doves' at the beginning of the war, with the overall percentage of 'doves' rising in relation to the rising number of male 'doves.' The female dominance of the 'dove' response therefore drops. Women were most likely to prefer

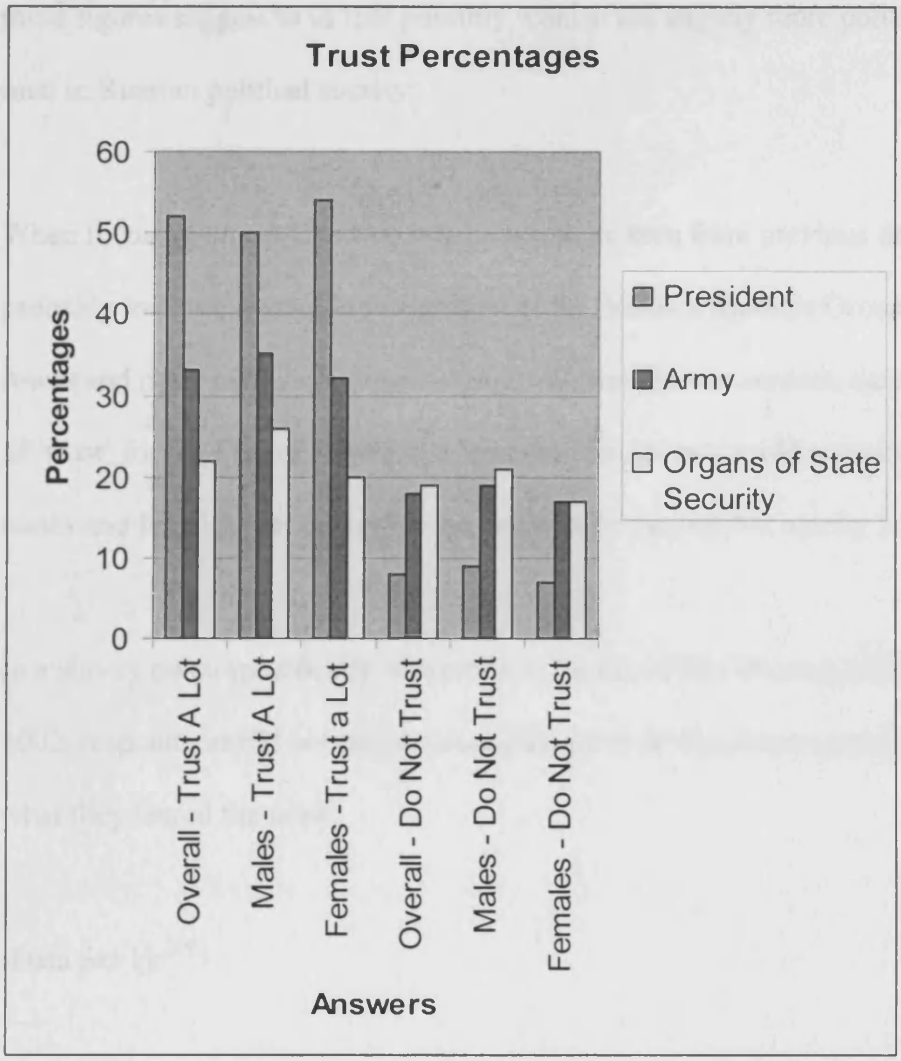
negotiations, especially in the first few months of conflict. Over time, with the rise of more 'male doves,' this variance evens out slightly.

In this polling data, we also find that while percentages of weak 'hawks' remain stagnant, anti-war opposition, as represented by 'dove' respondents, rises steadily in relation to the male vote tending to defect from 'stronger' pro-war positions to join the female 'dove' quotient.

Surveys in March 2001 show some differentiation in considerations of trust in institutions between men and women:

(Graph 4):[258]

[258] 'Doverie i nedoverie k institutam v marte 2001 g.' 2400 respondents, VTsIOM, *Monitoring obchchestvennogo mneniia*, VCIOM Press Ltd., Moskva, 2001, Vol. 3, No. 53, Mai-Iiun' 2001, p. 9.



From the graph above, we can see that male and female trust ratings do not differentiate from overall trust rating markedly. Women slightly trust the President more than males. Males tend to trust the army slightly more and the organs of state security noticeably more. On the other side, males do not trust all three markedly more than women. In all categories other than trust in the President, women weigh down the average.

On the basis that to not trust any of the three is the more radical of the two possible answers, this data could show that males are slightly more politically radical and generally willing to take an opposition point-of-view than women. Paradoxically, males are also slightly more willing to voice trust in both the security organs and the army, but not the President. Along these lines,

these figures suggest to us that possibly women are slightly more politically even-handed than men in Russian political society.

When focusing on the Chechen war however, as seen from previous data, this tendency is probably inconsequential in recognition of the Soldiers Mothers Group, Russian civil society as it was and other public opinion analyzed. Within the war context, data seen here shows a level of 'trust' for the President (and to a lesser extent, the army and security organs) among *both* males and females that underpins the support for the conflict among both sections of society.

In a survey taken specifically of women in Russia in late December 2001 and early January 2002, respondents did not rate the continuing war in Chechnya particularly high in regard to what they feared the most:

(Data Set 1):[259]

What is it that you fear most of all? (Multiple answers accepted)	**Percentages**
1. Losing my or my relatives' health	58
2. Staying without means of existence	44
3. War in connection of the lack of stability in the world or possible acts of terror	31
4. My child becoming a drug addict	30
5. Lack of perspectives for the children	28
6. Fears to lose job	26
7. Surge of prices for housing and communal services	25
8. Impossibility to get by himself/herself or to provide a good education	25

[259] Question: 'What is it that your fear most of all?' Possible answers as in Data Sheet. Institute for Inter-Disciplinary Social Studies (Russian Academy of Sciences), 1406 respondents. http://sofist.socpol.ru.

to children	
9. Vague prospects for the future	22
10. Loneliness	19
11. Criminality	16
12. Hard-heartedness, the loss of the sense of mutual aid in people's relationships	16
13. Protraction of the military operation in Chechnya	**15**
14. The loved one's infidelity	14
15. Impossibility to get medical help even in sharp necessity	14
16. My relative becoming an alcoholic	11
17. Being unable to create or preserve a family	11
18. Old age	9
19. Violence of someone close to you	3
20. I have no such fears	3

Interesting however is that while the continuing Chechen war came in 13th, war in terms of the danger of terrorism came in 3rd. Among women in general in rating the second war, the conflict is obviously less of an issue. When correlated with data showing generalized support for President Putin taken of the general population in chapter two (See Graph 9, Chapter Two), and also data showing a rise in people stating that they possessed a 'medium' stand of material living (See Graph 10, Chapter Two)[260], these above ratings are unsurprising.

The gender divide in Russian public opinion was therefore a fairly strong cleavage up to and including the *beginning* of the second Chechen war. Over time however, this divide lessened somewhat as the situation has progressed, as males join females in the more dovish responses,

[260] Also corresponding in this time period with a drop in the overall percentage of the general population saying their material position is 'bad.'

but could also, of course, still be a strong cleavage in regard to forthcoming events, such as the Beslan massacre and others.

The Age Divide

As in other democratic societies, the younger adult age groups of the Russian population have the highest levels of both the energy and the capability to support or oppose government policies, but also sometimes the highest levels of discontent with social life. Compounding this, Russia has also the experience of having its society descend from the more confining structures of the Communist era, which was the source of much youth angst in the late-Soviet period. (One of the youth's favourite rock bands, the popular 1980s Russian rock group named *Kino* led by the deceased singer-songwriter Victor Tsoi, was indicative of this.)

As covered by Donna Bahry and Lucan Way, Soviet doctrine and society presupposed that citizens naturally were inclined to participate in politics. Democracy generally assumes the opposite: that other societal activities decrease the desire of individuals in political involvement.[261] The transition from Soviet Communism to Russian 'democracy' has allowed in effect for the door to swing in the opposite direction. In the absence of governmentally-supported policy idealization and demanded political participation, Russian citizens have been given the freedom to not participate at all.

When allowed this freedom, in contrast to the Soviet era when democracy was insisted upon, the younger Russian generation has generally been less politically active, while older generations have continued heavy participation as was taught in the Soviet era. Lack of youth involvement in civil society and politics paradoxically parallel the effects on young Russian adults regarding

[261] Bahry, Donna and Lucan Way, 'Citizen Activism in the Russian Transition,' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 1994, p. 333. (pp. 330-366)

issues such as the Chechen war and the military draft, which has continued from Soviet times. Given Russia's recent authoritarian past, this is perhaps even more relevant than in other democratic countries where unpopular wars have been (and are currently) prosecuted.

Bahry and Way find a direct correlation in studies conducted in 1992 between year of birth, voting, support for free speech and approval of transition to market economy. They are able to graph the effect that the older a Russian citizen is, the more likely they are to vote, but at the same time less likely to protest and support market transition or free speech.[262]

Further to this, Natalia Zorkaia and Nadia Diuk find that:

> 'Young people are more likely to adhere strongly to values of individualism, personal initiative, and independence.'[263]

This is while at the same time:

> '[...]the most alarming trait of poorly adapted young people is their clearly expressed and aggressive nationalism; their acute suspicion or hostility towards "strangers," "foreigners," and "visitors"; and their increased susceptibility to militaristic rhetoric.'[264]

As found in the research for this thesis, these trends in some ways continue, while, however, following the overall general popularity indicators of specifically the Chechen issue. Further, a number of sources indicate this reasonable equity, but also some differences in age variation relative to support for the Chechen war.

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[262] Bahry, Donna and Lucan Way, 'Citizen Activism in the Russian Transition,' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 1994, p. 354. (pp. 330-366)
[263] Zorkaia, Natalia, and Nadia M. Diuk, 'Values and Attitudes of Young Russians,' *Russian Social Science Review*, Vol. 45, No. 5, Sept.-Oct. 2004, p. 5. (pp. 4 – 27)
[264] *Ibid*, p. 5.

In surveys conducted by VTsIOM and the Centre for the Study of Public Policy in the New Russia Borometer IX series, a number of age-based evaluations can be made for the period of time of 14-18 April 2000 involving the beginning of the second Chechen war.

The first questions enquired as to what levels of 'blame' that Russians considered several groups to warrant for the conflict. While the older generations had increasingly high levels of response that Middle Eastern terrorists had 'a lot' of blame for the conflict, higher levels of younger people had the view that such terrorists had only 'some' blame for the conflict, thereby choosing to spread the blame to other sources.

All age groups (18-29, 30-59 and 60+) blamed the Chechens themselves about equally with both 'a lot' and 'some blame' responses for the conflict in Chechnya.[265] Also, all age groups either partially or fully supported the actions of the Russian government in Chechnya about equally, although a slightly, possibly irrelevant, higher percentage of 60+ respondents fully supported Russian actions in Chechnya (39% of 60+ versus 36% of 18-29 and 30-59).[266]

All age groups about equally wanted themselves or close relatives to not go to Chechnya if only volunteers were called, although percentages predictably corresponded to age in health questions relative to capability (30% of 60+ respondents felt themselves unable to go based on health or other reasons compared to lower levels or younger age groups).[267] Statistically equal

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[265] Question: 'How much would you say each of the following is to be blamed for the conflict in Chechnya? a) Extremists from Middle Eastern Countries b) FSB/KGB plot c) USA d) Chechens. Possible answers: 1) A lot 2) Some 3) Not much 4) Not at all. 14-18 April 2000, 1600 respondents, Data from: Rose, Richard, 'Russia Elects a President: New Russia Barometer IX,' *Studies in Public Policy Number 330*, Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, 2000, p. 40.

[266] Question: 'What is your attitude to the actions of the Russian government in Chechnya?' Possible answers: 1) Fully support 2) Support to some degree 3) Many criticisms 4) Definitely oppose. Same universe for survey. Data from: Rose, Richard, 'Russia Elects a President: New Russia Barometer IX,' *Studies in Public Policy Number 330*, Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, 2000, p. 41.

[267] Question: 'If only volunteers were sent to conflict areas, would you be willing to go yourself or see your husband, son, brother or other close relative, go to Chechnya to fight the bandits and terrorists?' Possible answers:

percentages across age groups believed that Chechnya would ultimately be a part of Russia in a final outcome.[268]

A slightly higher percentage of the 18-29 age group believed that Chechnya north of the Terek River would be part of Russia (10% of 18-29, 5% and 6% of 30-59 and 60+ respectively). This perhaps represents the rise in intensity in the post-Soviet era of the bogeyman of Chechens in collective thought as the archetypal fighting mountain man with whom you would not want to fight on their own turf. Also, perhaps this result represents a willingness to redraw long-held borders that is not as easily shared by the older generations. All age groups about equally respond that they believe that the fighting will continue without end or that the fighting will extend across the North Caucasus.

On the question of their opinion about the possible separation of Chechnya from Russia, the 18-29 age groups seems, in April of 2000, slightly less enthusiastic about the new war in Chechnya and less bothered by the eventuality of Chechen independence, as seen from the graph below:

(Graph 5):[269]

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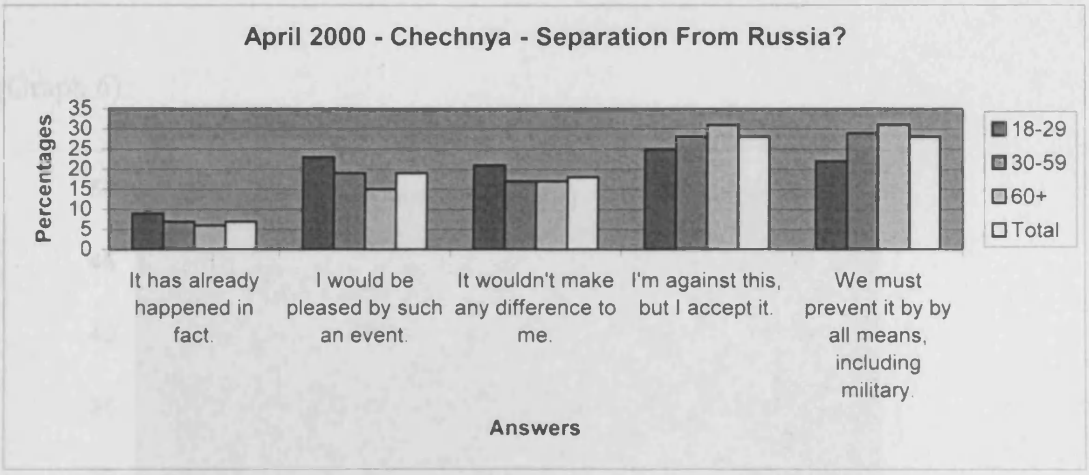
1) Yes 2) No 3) Couldn't go because of health, other reasons. Same universe for survey. Data from: Rose, Richard, 'Russia Elects a President: New Russia Barometer IX,' *Studies in Public Policy Number 330*, Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, 2000, p. 41.

[268] Question: 'What do you think will be the eventual outcome of the conflict in Chechnya?' Possible answers: 1) All of Chechnya will be part of Russia 2) Chechnya north of the Terek [will be] part of Russia 3) Fighting continues with enormous losses on both sides 4) Protracted fighting will spread to other parts of the North Caucasus. Same survey universe for survey. Same universe for survey. Data from: Rose, Richard, 'Russia Elects a President: New Russia Barometer IX,' *Studies in Public Policy Number 330*, Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, 2000, p. 41.

[269] Question: 'What do you think of the possible separation of Chechnya from Russia?' Possible answers as in graph 1. Same universe for survey. Data from: Rose, Richard, 'Russia Elects a President: New Russia Barometer IX,' *Studies in Public Policy Number 330*, Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, 2000, p. 41.



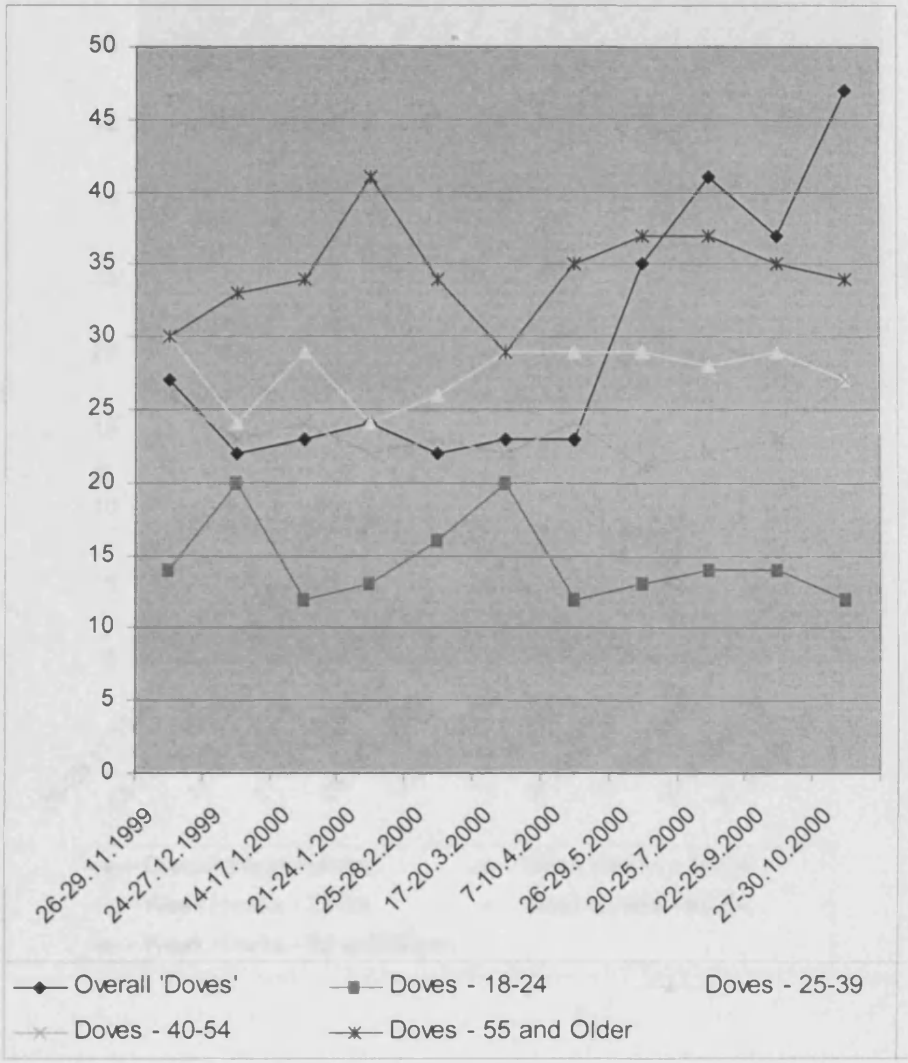
Yet, even among 18-29 year olds (those most likely to be doing the actual fighting) there is still a relatively high level of indifference and a high percentage of war supporters.

When directly reviewing data on specifically who is opposed to war and to what degree, results are more strongly inconclusive. Looking at questions dealing with the breakdown of people who agreed with the previously discussed 'dove' and 'weak hawk' stratifications in the same surveys as detailed in the section on the gender divide, conclusions according to age are far from clear.

As seen from the chart below, between late November 1999 and late October 2000, there seems to be no correlation between age and the rising number of respondents with 'dove' responses. Only those 40 to 54 years of age seem to correlate with the final months rise in number of 'doves.'[270]

[270] Data from the following two graphs reflect responses to a group of questions asked of respondents in sequence. The 'overall' line represents 100% and the other lines represent sections of the 'overall' line. Question 1: 'Do you think the offensive operation of Federal troops in Chechnya should continue or peace negotiations with the leaders of Chechnya should start?' Possible answers: 1) Continue the approach of Federal troops 2) Enter into negotiations with Chechen leadership 3) Difficult to answer. The data in Graph 6 reflects those who answered with number 2 from this question. Those who answered with Answers 1 or 3 were asked a second question. Follow-up question: 'And if the troops continue to suffer heavy losses in the offensive operation, do you think that the offensive operation should nevertheless continue in Chechnya, or in this case it would be necessary to start peace talks with the leaders in Chechnya?' Possible answers: 1) Continue the approach of Federal troops 2) Enter into negotiations with Chechen leadership 3) Difficult to answer. The data in Graph 7 reflects those who answered with Answer 2 in the follow-up question. The implication is that those who answered with answer 1, to continue the war operation no matter the cost, are considered 'strong hawks' as opposed to the 'weak hawks' as designated. In this survey data, respondents were also separated according to age groups 18-24, 25-39, 40-54 and 55 and older. VTsIOM, surveys

(Graph 6):



When considering those who the 'weak hawks,' those who agree that Federal troops should be pulled out of Chechnya if they suffered heavy casualties, statistics are even more inconclusive. There seems to be little if any connection between age and the percentage of those with this response to the prevalent two questions.

(Graph 7):

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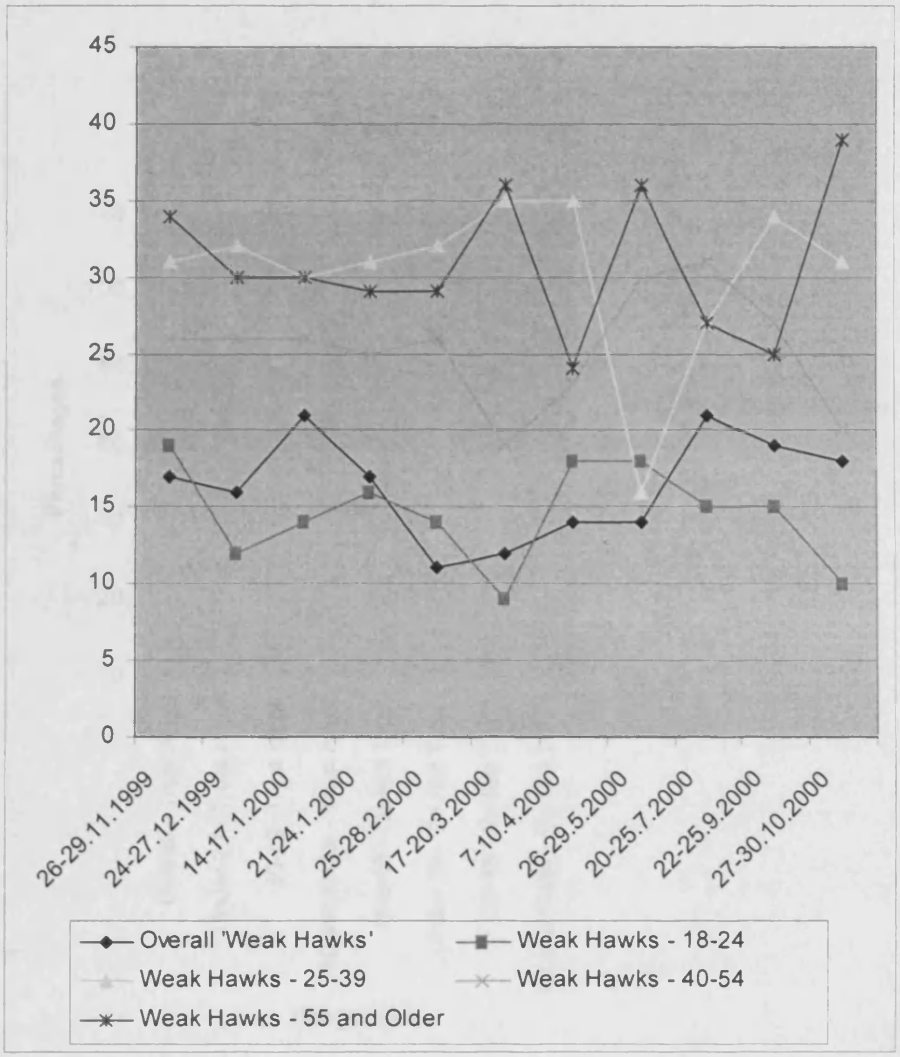
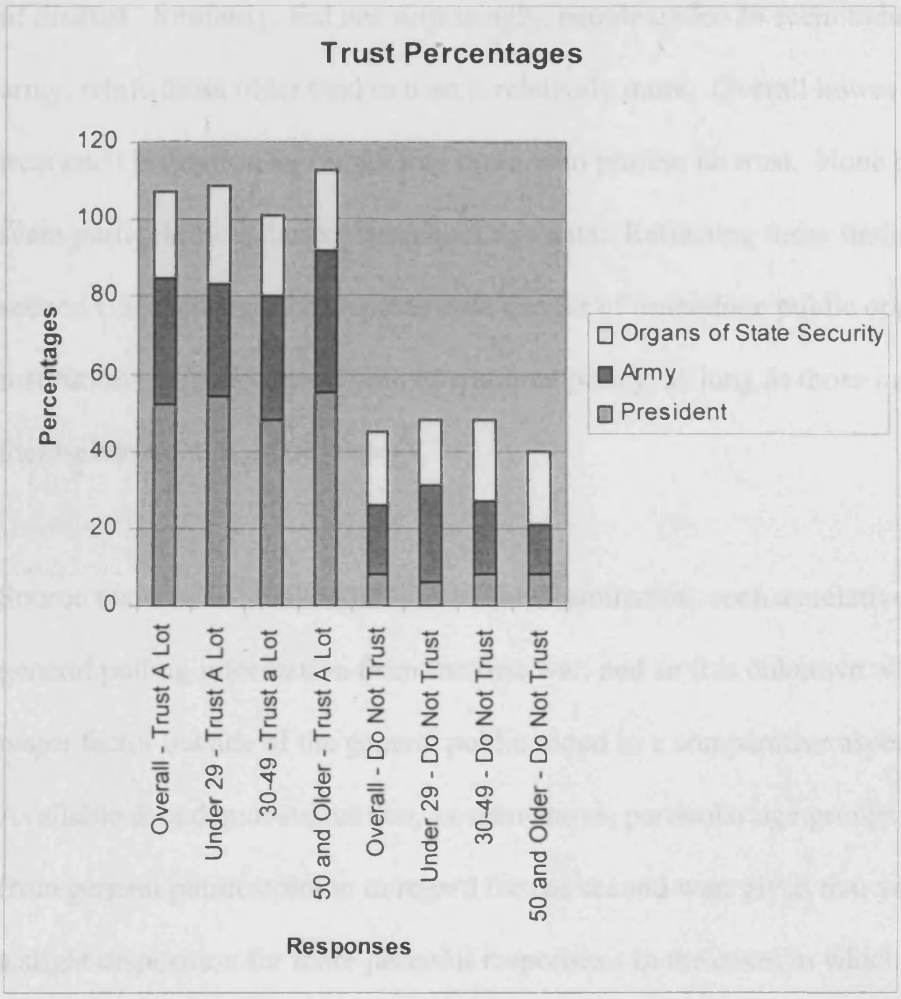
are on average of 1600 respondents with fewer answering the follow-up question. Data from: VTsIOM Express Polls 1999-16,1999-21, 2000-3, 2000-4, 2000-9. 2000-13, 2000-15, 2000-16, 2000-18, 2000-21, 2000-22. http://sofist.socpol.ru/. See also: VTsIOM, *Monitoring obchshestvennogo mneniia*, VCIOM Press Ltd., No. 6, Vol. 50, Moskva, Noiabr-Dekabr 2000, p. 49, table 2.



On the age divide, research for this thesis finds that, although some traditional trends continue from the Soviet era in terms of likely voters and other points, there is little cause for believing that age is a factor for inference on whether or not they support particularly the second Chechen war.

On the issue of trust ratings for institutions from March 2001, some observations can be made on this divide also:

(Graph 8):[271]



In every category except for organs of state security, the 50 and older age group 'trusts' more. Surprisingly however, except for the army, the under-29 group generally has more trust in two segments. On the opposite side, not surprisingly the army is the institution that people under-29 most do not trust. On the other hand, those over 30 lead the way in saying they do not trust the security services.

A number of conclusions can be made from these findings. While Putin might be from the security services and while in this era his Presidency is far from being unpopular, a substantial

[271] 'Doverie i nedoverie k institutam v marte 2001 g.' 2400 respondents, VTsIOM, *Monitoring obchestvennogo mneniia*, VCIOM Press Ltd., 2001, Vol. 3, No. 53, Moskva, Mai-Iiun' 2001, p. 9.

number especially from the under-49 age groups might remember that the security services are not necessarily to be trusted. In many cases in March 2001, they reflect the largest percentages of distrust. Similarly, and not surprisingly, people under-29 seem to have the least trust in the army, while those older tend to trust it relatively more. Overall however, those who say that they trust each institution far outnumber those who profess no trust. None of the three institutions seem particularly in danger in view of this data. Reflecting these findings on the issue of the second Chechen war, there seems little danger of immediate public opposition for the three institutions most in contact with operational policy, as long as those institutions choose to themselves continue that strategy.

Source material is found to be limited for examination, such as relative detailed breakdowns of general polling information from the first war, and so it is unknown whether age has been a major factor outside of the general public mood in a comparative aspect *between* the two wars. Available data demonstrates that, as seen above, particular age groups do not substantially break from general public opinion in regard for the second war, given that younger age groups do have a slight disposition for more peaceful responses. In the cases in which they do break, there seems to be an unpredictable pattern.

The Rural/Urban Divide

Another potential divide over opinion on the Chechen war is between rural and city dwellers. In surveys conducted near the end of the first conflict, but just before the Presidential election ending in Yeltsin's victory, some understanding can be found on this.

A survey of rural dwellers conducted by VTsIOM between the 22nd of April and the 12th of May 1996 shows that 18% say that the war must be carried on resolutely until enemies are

destroyed, 24% said that negotiations should begin and 40% said that Russian troops should disengage from contact with the Chechens and then an agreement should be reached (essentially the call for surrender).[272]

Further to this, in all-Russia VTsIOM *Express* polling data conducted the same time that tended to focus on the major cities (although some rural inhabitants were also included), 48% believed that Russian troops should first withdraw. 35% thought that order should be restored in Chechnya and then start to negotiate and withdraw.[273]

Except for a slightly higher percentage by urban inhabitants overall advocating early withdrawal, purely on the basis of this polling data, there does not seem a tangible difference in consideration of the wars in Chechnya based on purely the Rural/Urban divide.

For a useful comparison, however, on the bigger political question of Yeltsin's re-election as President in 1996, the Rural/Urban divide is one of the cases where this cleavage was particularly relevant. The rural sections of Russia have been the most sympathetic to the conservative Communist party and have had the least contact with the media. In February of 1996, VTsIOM polling data showed that Yeltsin was trailing Zyuganov by sizable margins in large towns, small towns and in the countryside. Given Yeltsin's media campaign in support of re-election, by June, just before the election, Zyuganov remained in the lead only amongst respondents in the countryside.

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[272] Question: 'How should, in your opinion, the Chechen crisis be solved today?' Possible answers: 1) It is necessary to conduct resolute action to destroy insurgents 2) It is necessary to offer Chechens negotiations 3) It is necessary to disengage Russian armies from the Chechen republic and make an agreement 4) Difficult to answer. VTsIOM, Rural (SP- 1996-37), 1923 respondents, 22.04.1996 - 12.05.1996, http://sofist.socpol.ru.

[273] Question: 'What is more right in your mind concerning the policy in Chechnya?' Possible answers: 1) Russian troops should be withdrawn as soon as possible and then decide 2) Order must be restored in the Chechen Republic, and then negotiations. VTsIOM, VCIOM Express 1996-9, 1599 respondents, 26.04.1996 - 05.05.1996, http://sofist.socpol.ru.

In large cities in February 1996, Zyuganov led Yeltsin by nine percentage points, 21% to 12%. By June 1996, this would be much the opposite, with Yeltsin leading by 18 percentage points, 40% to 22%. Similarly, in February 1996, Zyuganov led Yeltsin in small towns by an even greater margin of 15 percentage points, 26% to 11%. Again however, this would be the opposite by June 1996, with Yeltsin leading Zyuganov by 16 percentage points, 38% to 23%.

Only in the countryside did Zyuganov maintain any lead in this time period, and not by a great margin. In February, Zyuganov led Yeltsin by 18 percentage points, 27% to 9%. By June 1996, this lead shrank to four points, 35% to 31%.[274] When taking the Chechen war factor in consideration, it seems that the issue of the conflict was somewhat neutral in a greater determination of why Yeltsin won the 1996 election.

When Yeltsin made the economy and who best could run the country into an issue as stated in the second chapter, then Russian public opinion was faced with choosing a President based on themes larger than the Chechen war, despite whatever it might think about the viability of the war. This is also perhaps in contrast to perceptions by the Yeltsin administration, as suggested in chapter two, that the Chechen war needed to be settled in some way in order to gain Yeltsin's re-election.

As with the breakdowns used to provide analysis of the gender and age divides, the second war can be examined using extensive data sets from 1999 and 2000 VTsIOM *Express* polling data.[275]

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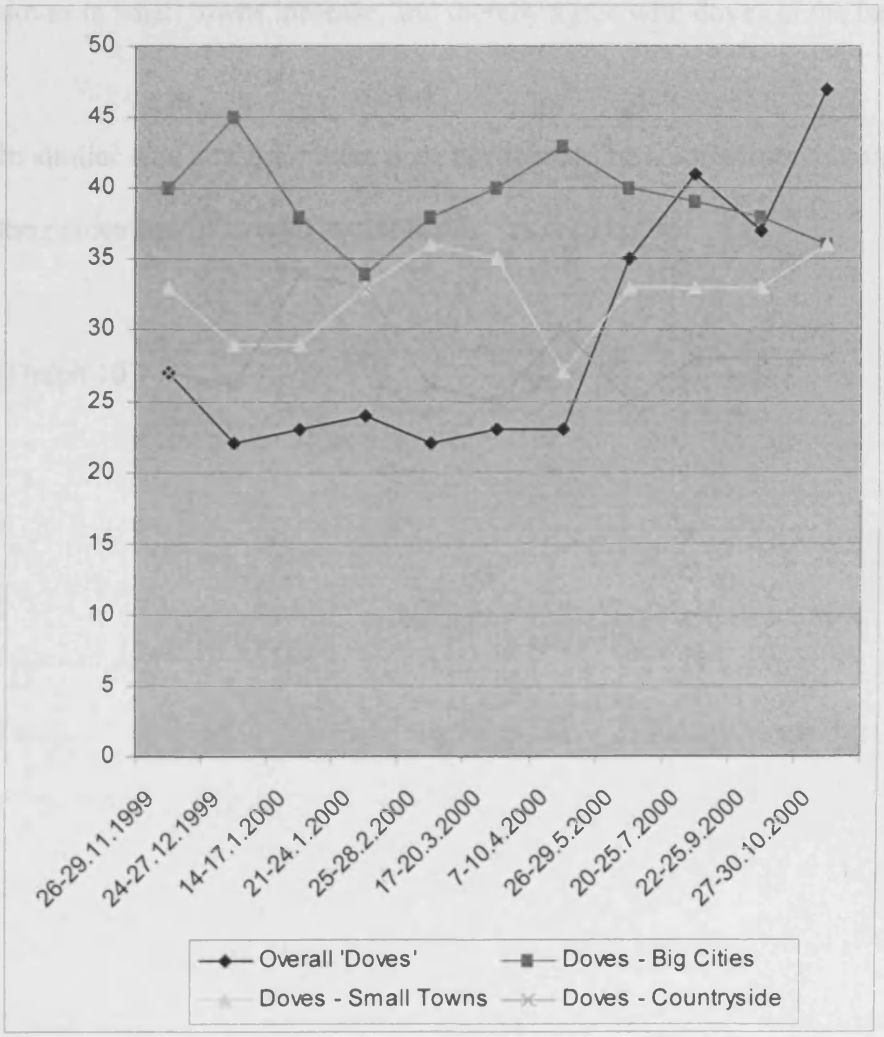
[274] Gudkov, Lev, Presidentskie vybory 1996 goda i obshestvennoe mnenie, VTsIOM, Moskva, 1996, p. 54.

[275] Data from the following two graphs reflect responses to a group of questions asked of respondents in sequence. The 'overall' line represents 100% and the other lines represent sections of the 'overall' line. Question 1: 'Do you think the offensive operation of Federal troops in Chechnya should continue or peace negotiations with the leaders of Chechnya should start?' Possible answers: 1) Continue the approach of Federal troops 2) Enter into negotiations with Chechen leadership 3) Difficult to answer. The data in Graph 9 reflects those who answered with number 2 from this question. Those who answered with Answers 1 or 3 were asked a second question. Follow-up question: 'And if the troops continue to suffer heavy losses in the offensive operation, do you think that the offensive operation should nevertheless continue in Chechnya, or in this case it would be necessary to start peace talks with the leaders in Chechnya?' Possible answers: 1) Continue the approach of Federal troops 2) Enter into negotiations with Chechen leadership 3) Difficult to answer. The data in Graph 10 reflects those who answered with Answer 2 in

Additional knowledge can be gained when 'dove' and 'weak hawk' voting responses are separated out according to city size (large cities, small cities and villages).

Again, as was the case with the age divide, there does not seem to be a direct relationship between those who have the most dovish response to the first question and their residence in a large city, small town, or the countryside:

(Graph 9):

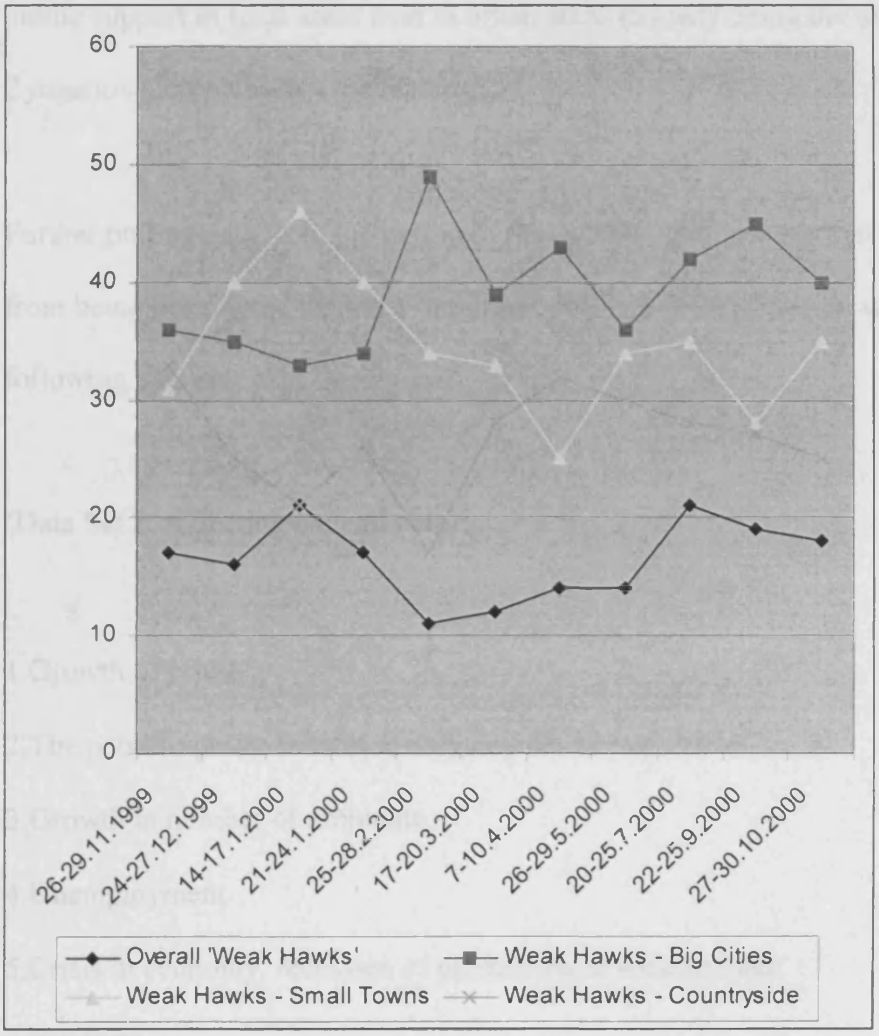


Follow-up question. The implication is that those who answered with answer 1, to continue the war operation no matter the cost, are considered 'strong hawks' as opposed to the 'weak hawks' as designated. In this survey data, respondents were also separated according to residence in large towns, small towns, or the countryside. VTsIOM, surveys are on average of 1600 respondents with fewer answering the follow-up question. Data from: VTsIOM Express Polls 1999-16,1999-21, 2000-3, 2000-4, 2000-9. 2000-13, 2000-15, 2000-16, 2000-18, 2000-21, 2000-22. http://sofist.socpol.ru/. See also: *Monitoring obchestvennogo mneniia*, VTsIOM, No. 6, Vol. 50, Noiabr-Dekabr 2000, p. 49, table 2.

In the first year of the second Chechen war, as the percentage of doves spiked, relative percentages of all three sections of residency locations remained somewhat the same, except for a growth in doves in the small towns parallel to the overall increase and relative to a decrease in the opposing two percentages in the April to May.2000 time period. Although not sufficient to conclusively state, as the overall 'dove' percentage rose, so did the 'small town' response percentage relative to a decrease in the 'large town' division, perhaps showing that the small town doves response *could* be a determining factor. This would be the case when the number of doves in small towns increase, and thereby agree with doves in the large towns.

In similar data however, there does not seem to be a correlation between residency location and the percentage of overall 'weak hawks' as seen below:

(Graph 10):



As seen above, the divisions of weak hawks are all over the place compare to the more or less stagnant percentage of overall weak hawks. After a year of data, the overall percentage remained virtually unchanged in this case, while locations parallel spiked and decreased almost incoherently.

As a continuing side note, back on the issue of comparisons between data on the Chechen war and data on presidential elections, according to FOM polling data during Putin's first presidential election cycle in 2000, Zyuganov and his communist party persisted in having trends of greater

public support in rural areas than in urban areas (usually being the only locales where the Zyuganov/Communists were leading).[276]

Further polling data from the period of the second war[277] shows that the Chechen war was far from being considered the most important problem facing Russian society, as seen from the following data set:

(Data Set 2: reflecting **overall** data):

1.Growth of prices	70
2.The poor, impoverishment of majority of the population	60
3.Growth in number of criminals	43
4.Unemployment	34
5.Crisis in economy, recession of production in industry and agriculture	32
6.Growth in narcotics	31
7.Lack of access to medical services	30
8.Sharp division of rich and poor, injustice of the divisions in income	28
9.Crisis of morals, culture, morality	26
9.Lack of access to education	26

[276] Data according to residence type, FOM polling data, 15 March 2000: http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/policy/president2/presidential_elections/prezidentskie_vbor_-_2000/elect_domicile/t001011. 24 March 2000: http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/policy/president2/presidential_elections/prezidentskie_vbor_-_2000/elect_domicile/t001112. and others.

[277] Question: 'Which of these problems of our society demand more from you, and you consider most important?' Possible answers as in data sets (Multiple answers could be given). 2107 respondents: broken down for analysis by Moscow and St. Petersburg (195), large cities (408), medium cities (427), small cities (528) and rural/villages (549). VTsIOM, *Monitoring obchestvennogo mneniia*, VCIOM Press Ltd., Moscow, 2002, Vol. 5, No. 61, Sentiabr'-Oktiabr 2002, p. 81.

11.Corruption, bribery	23
12.Worsening composition of environment	18
13.War actions in Chechnya	**17**
14.Threat of explosions and other terrorist attacks in the place where you live	15
14.Weakness, Helplessness of state power	15
16.Delay in payment of salary, pension, aid	11
17.Growth in nationalism, worsening international relations	9
18.Conflicts in leadership of the country	3
19.Limits in citizens' rights, democratic freedoms (Freedom of speech, press)	2
19.Difficult to answer	2
21.Other	1

When data is subdivided into respondents from the villages/countryside, results show very little difference to overall results in so far as the ratings given the importance of the Chechen war:

(Data Set 3: reflecting **countryside** data):

1.Growth of prices	76
2.The poor, impoverishment of majority of the population	64
3.Unemployment	44
3.Growth in number of criminals	44
5.Crisis in economy, recession of production in industry and agriculture	34

6.Lack of access to medical services	32
7.Sharp division of rich and poor, injustice of the divisions in income	29
8.Growth in narcotics	28
9.Corruption, bribery	22
10.Crisis of morals, culture, morality	21
10.Lack of access to education	21
12.Worsening composition of environment	14
12.War actions in Chechnya	**14**
12.Threat of explosions and other terrorist attacks in the place where you live	14
15.Delay in payment of salary, pension, aid	13
16.Weakness, Helplessness of state power	10
17.Growth in nationalism, worsening international relations	7
18.Difficult to answer	4
19.Conflicts in leadership of the country	3
20.Other	1
21.Limits in citizens' rights, democratic freedoms (Freedom of speech, press)	>0

For residents of Moscow and St. Petersburg, results are not markedly different in ranking, however in percentage, the Chechen war is held as being of slightly greater importance, with 20% as compared to 14% in the villages surveyed:

(Data Set 4: reflecting **Moscow/St. Petersburg** data):

1.Growth of prices	59
2.The poor, impoverishment of majority of the population	56
3.Growth in number of criminals	40
4.Crisis in economy, recession of production in industry and agriculture	35
4.Crisis of morals, culture, morality	35
6.Lack of access to medical services	33
7.Corruption, bribery	31
8.Sharp division of rich and poor, injustice of the divisions in income	29
9.Worsening composition of environment	28
10.Growth in narcotics	27
11.Unemployment	23
12.Threat of explosions and other terrorist attacks in the place where you live	20
12. War actions in Chechnya	**20**
14.Lack of access to education	18
15.Growth in nationalism, worsening international relations	18
16.Weakness, Helplessness of state power	16
17.Conflicts in leadership of the country	4
18.Delay in payment of salary, pension, aid	4
19.Limits in citizens' rights, democratic freedoms (Freedom of speech, press)	3
20.Other	2
21.Difficult to answer	>0

This comparison does not bear out however when looking at data collected from other major cities:

(Data Set 5: reflecting **other major cities** data):

1.Growth in prices	67
2.The poor, impoverishment of majority of the population	60
3.Growth in number of criminals	43
4.Growth in narcotics	37
5.Crisis in economy, recession of production in industry and agriculture	34
6.Lack of access to education	33
7.Sharp division of rich and poor, injustice of the divisions in income	32
8.Lack of access to medical services	31
9.Unemployment	30
10.Crisis of morals, culture, morality	28
11.Corruption, bribery	25
12.Weakness, Helplessness of state power	21
13.Worsening composition of environment	18
14.Threat of explosions and other terrorist attacks in the place where you live	12
14. War actions in Chechnya	**12**
16.Growth in nationalism, worsening international relations	7
17.Conflicts in leadership of the country	2

18.Delay in payment of salary, pension, aid	2
19.Limits in citizens' rights, democratic freedoms (Freedom of speech, press)	1
20.Other	1
21.Difficult to answer	1

From the above data sets, there is a higher level of consideration in actual percentages given to the Chechen wars in Moscow and St. Petersburg as opposed to other large cities and the villages. This perhaps can be attributed to a higher level of importance given to political situations such as the Chechen wars in those two cities than in other parts of Russia. Particularly:

> 'Moscow is not only generally held to be the leader of Russian regions, but also exhibits many negative tendencies and problems characteristic of Russian society as a whole...'[278]

A real connection to ranking in relation to other problems is not seen however. In all the cases, war actions in Chechnya are ranked between 12th and 14th in comparison to other issues. As compared to this, growth in prices, an economic issue, is the most important in all sections, ranking 1st in all data here.

Based on the findings in this section, there is no clear link between considerations of the wars in Chechnya along a Rural/Urban divide. Any conclusion based on data reviewed would be purely speculative in looking at a potential cleavage along these lines outside of a certain conservative bias, as shown by some past tendency for Communist support in rural locales.

[278] Alexandrov, Oleg, 'Moscow: Center and Periphery,' Russian Regions and Regionalism, (eds.) Graeme B. Herd and Anne Aldis, RoutledgeCurzon, London and New York, 2003, p. 259 (pp. 246-264)

The Regional Divide

On the question of the regional divide, perhaps no other cleavage in study of Russian public opinion on the Chechen wars could theoretically have as much deviation as on this topic. While on the basis of resources, it is true that the Chechen wars have depleted national reserves and manpower from all sections of Russia, it is also true that the ongoing conflict has affected southern Russia differently than other parts of the country. Russian public opinion must be presumed to have deviated somewhere along these lines.

Nevertheless, because very little primary data source material separates response according to enough precise regions, and a lot of material is associated closer to the rural/urban divide, then for the purposes of this thesis not much can be said absolutely about this particular divide. Yet, for the sake of being thorough, this section will seek to examine what is known about this cleavage.

There are a number of sub-divides on this issue. Some parts of Russia have generally looked to Europe more as an example to follow in such considerations of morality and war. Other parts of Russia 'feel' more distant from the conflict in Chechnya, and therefore less involved in the daily perils of the situation. It is logical to assume that a Russian citizen living nearby the war zone must have a different perspective from a citizen living in St. Petersburg or a citizen of Vladivostok living no less than eight times zones away.

A number of polls published by *Izvestiia* in late 1994 would demonstrate this. In a survey of Russians in St. Petersburg, 37% were in favour of the Russian Army continuing to use 'forcible methods' in the Chechen war, while 51% opposed this idea. On the other hand, in Stavropol and

Krasnodar (two southern Russian cities extremely close to the conflict), public opinion was substantially different. In those two cities:

> '[...]the majority support the use of force and express readiness to help the Army.'[279]

This divide is in some ways entirely understandable. If fighting is nearby, in a neighbouring region, it has a greater impact on the individual's life and, therefore, deeper uncertainty about security and a much wider suspicion of those neighbours (as a group). Uncertainty about security leads to greater fear involved in everyday life. Perhaps, as the argument goes in Beslan years later, one's children are not safe from guerillas or terrorists (or whatever one might choose to call them) even at school. Those seeking to expand the war into all of the Northern Caucasus could easily choose this route to make the war more difficult for federal troops in the area.

Also impacting on this are the economic aspects of living near a conflict zone. The wars in Chechnya have created a tide of refugees from the area, although the Russian government has sought to contain this issue as much as possible. Especially in the second war, through the use of the infamous filtration camps, the Russian government has sought to limit the economic impact of refugees on the rest of the country. This has met with varying degrees of success. Regions near to Chechnya have borne the brunt of this problem. As suggesting from the poll numbers above, if not on the security issue then on the economic and social issues, inhabitants of the southern regions close to the northern Caucasus had a strong incentive to support the imposition of order, even when the rest of the country seemed to be predisposed to wanting peace.

Proximity to the war zone is of course a significant factor in this analysis but not the only model for examination. Parallel to the ethnic divide, the Russian Federation includes a number of

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[279] 'Boi proigran na pole obshestvenoi brani,' *Izvestiia*, No. 247 (24354), 24 Dekabr' 1994, p. 4, All quotes and data concerning the surveys taken by *Izvestiia* in the previous two paragraphs originated from this article.

subjects and 'republics' who have had their own thoughts of independence, some closer to Chechnya and some farther away that have also on occasion sympathized to a degree with the idea of Chechen independence.

Other sections of the Russian Federation thought about independence after the Soviet Union fell. Only Chechnya however attempted this path, while the others signed deals that have debatably degraded over time. These region-centre agreements have been eroded even more especially in the era of Putin and in his attempt to add another layer above the level of the 88 Russian Federal subjects. Amongst other things, re-imposition of the state has really meant the effort to re-centralize the state, giving Putin some degree of control as President where Yeltsin had, partially through his Chechen policy, presupposed a push of the regions away from the centre.[280]

If the Chechen conflicts have had any possible positive effect for Moscow however, it is that over the long term the Chechen conflict has shown that a single Russian region cannot stand against the centre. In order to have regional independence, if ever possible, then other regions must join the secession effort. Otherwise, Chechnya would become a harbinger of the future for those considering lone separation.

Also of importance is the relationship of regionalism to the military. It is probably true that in the first war, as Dr. Pavel K. Baev argues, while the military had undoubtedly a complex identity and culture in the regional consideration:

> '[...]the very fact that the army had little choice but to follow the order of the commander-in-chief to go to war further reinforced its 'presidential' identity.'[281]

[280] Sakwa, Richard, Russian Politics and Society, 2nd ed., Routledge, London and New York, 1996, p. 209.
[281] Baev, Pavel K., 'Military Aspects of Regionalism,' Russian Regions and Regionalism, (eds.) Graeme B. Herd and Anne Aldis, RoutledgeCurzon, London and New York, 2003, p. 123 (pp. 120-137)

Secondly, Baev discusses the dichotomy wherein, while the almost constant rotation of military units in the conflict reinforced the unity of the military in relation to the conflict, at the same time the failure of Yeltsin's justification of war led to a further weakening of authority between the regions and the centre.[282]

Baev goes on to further examine the attempts of Putin in light of his new administration and the second Chechen war to add a new level of regional control in the form of policies for the Federal District framework of 2000. The relationship between civil/military regionalism, public opinion and the second Chechen war would be an interesting subject for examination. While if data was found for such analysis, then a more complete divide could be examined on the basis of a civilian/military divide within Russian society. Such data has not been seen however, if it should exist at all, and therefore will not be discussed in this chapter.

These are all issues of importance that should be kept in mind in any discussion of the regional divide. While this section has sought not to cherry pick any particular city or region and addressed that data to any wider region (i.e. to say that polling data from Vladivostok is representative of the Russian Far East or another example of that nature), there is an acknowledgement that such a possibility perhaps has some truth, albeit not attempted here.

The Political Divide

On the political divide, perhaps more can be established than on the previous section concerning regionalization. Looking first at political membership, As Cynthia Buckley and Regina Smyth write in their chapter entitled, 'The Ties That Bind:'

[282] *Ibid*, p. 124.

'The patterns of substantive significance are even more striking. In contrast with regional effects, which tend to be relatively weak, membership in the KPRF, the Agrarians, and the DVR (Democratic Choice of Russia Party) shows very strong effects on the positions of individual members. Thus, across this bundle of issues, party organizations represent a clear choice that can be communicated to voters in electoral campaigns. This tendency toward national party organizations could provide a strong centripetal mechanism linking political elites, activists, and ultimately voters together across regions.'[283]

This section will seek to elaborate on these differences based on acknowledged political activity as can be related to our understanding of public opinion and the Chechen wars.

Politically, there have been a number of turns in support and opposition for the Chechen war in Russian public opinion. Beyond the simplifications of political left and right as somewhat dismissed by some such as Timothy Colton[284], there exists the generalization that those regarding themselves as liberal or democratic were generally more opposed to the first war, while elements of 'conservative' Russian society (i.e. particularly Communist supporters, heavily represented in the older populations as covered in the section on the age divide) were more passive on this issue. All of this was in the context of, as Sarah Oates analyzes using VTsIOM polling data in relation to the first Chechen war:

'[...]it is clear that there has been a sharp decline in interest in Westernized, liberal values since the heady days of the creation of the new Russian state in late 1991.'[285]

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[283] Buckley, Cynthia and Regina Smyth, 'The Ties That Bind: The Importance of Region in the Construction of Social and Political Citizenship,' The Fragmented Space of the Russian Federation, (eds.) Blair A. Ruble, Jodi Koehn, and Nancy E. Popson, Woodrow Wilson Centre Press, Washington DC, 2001, p. 111.
[284] See Colton, Timothy, Transitional Citizens: Voters and What Influences Them in the New Russia, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA and London, 2001.
[285] Oates, Sarah, Television, Democracy and Elections in Russia, Routledge, London and New York, 2006, p. 53.

In the second war, this state of affairs has changed substantially. Albeit while again declining over time, Putin and his administration has managed to rally the voices of the conservative elements of Russian political actors in favour of his Chechen policy, and even to gather a little support, at least initially, from some liberal and pro-democratic politicians.

Reflecting his centrist stance (that as yet no other politicians has been able to noticeably break), Putin in any case has been able to claim support from all sides during the second war in Chechnya. Data collected in chapter two necessarily includes the relative levels of support for the Yeltsin and Putin administration in references to the two wars. Beyond this, emphasis on a political divide is somewhat difficult.

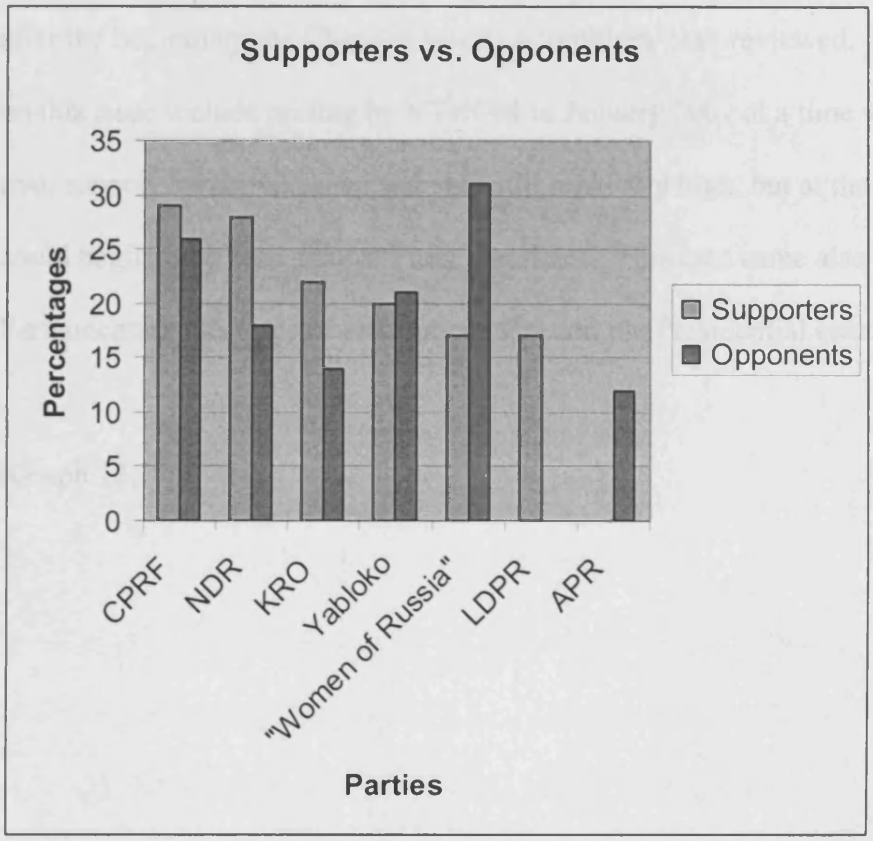
Traditionally thought of as conservative, the Communist party has taken few stands on the issue, having tolerated, with little choice in the matter, the Yeltsin administration policy in the first war and then having supported the Putin administration in the second war again out of a sense of necessity if for no other reason. This has occurred within a political society, opposed to this political 'conservatism' as standing for nostalgia of the Soviet era, where parties have existed with few clear lines of division, of distinction between political liberalism and centrism, and sometimes of fascist tendencies. Elitism and personalities have continued to dominate rather than grassroots support in the party sphere.

However, some conclusions can be found on debate with this issue.

Data produced by FOM in their surveys of early December 1995 find some correlations between those for and against the war in Chechnya in relation to parties that respondents were closest to, as seen from the following graph:

(Graph 11):[286]

(*No reason is given in the data for the absence of information for 'opponents' in the case of LDPR and 'supporters' for APR.)



Clearly the most progressive parties had the largest percentages of opponents, led by Yavlinsky's 'Yabloko' party and, in a parallel to the gender divide, the 'Women of Russia' party. This is also in connection with other earlier FOM polling data of June 1995 showing that overall, a plurality of 37% would only vote for someone in the Duma who was against the war, and a decreasing number saying that they were neutral on the conflict in elections (19%, versus 25% in December

[286] Question: 'The party closest to you in your own position, what would you like to see in the Duma?' Possible answers include 'for' and 'against' the introduction of troops in Chechnya in which more than one answer could be given. 2 December 1995, FOM, 1519 respondents. http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/societas/Chechnya/truck_war/of19954902.

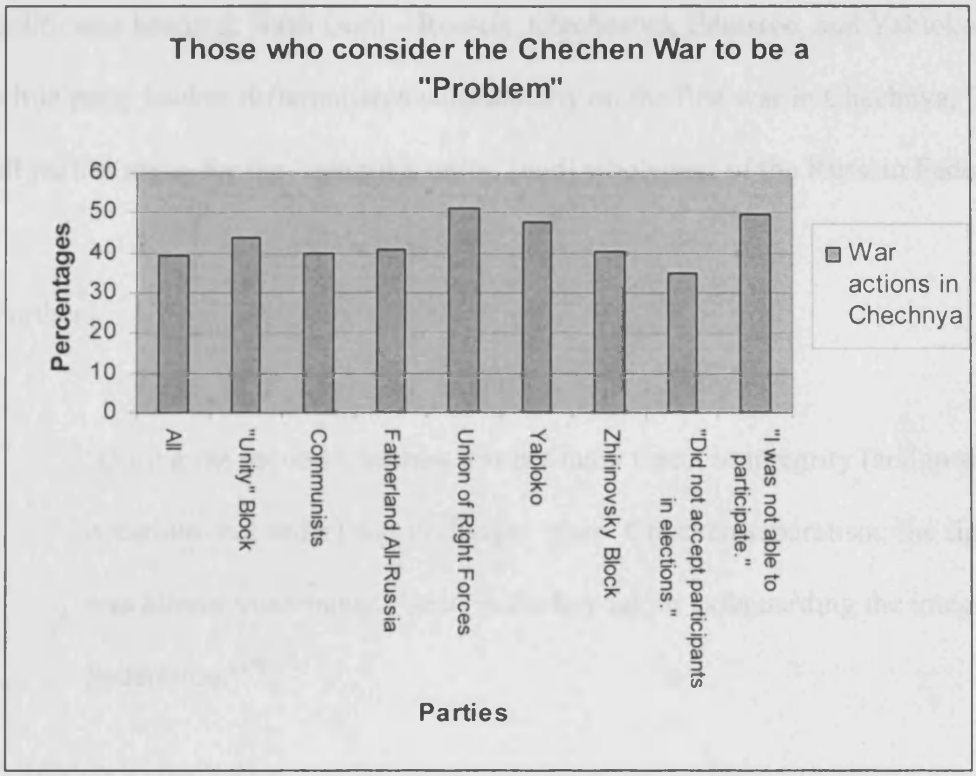
1994).[287] If anything, as shown from chapter two, this move against the war continued in the interim time period between the surveys.

In comparison, in polling data taken at roughly the same point of the second war (around a year after the beginning, the Chechen war as a 'problem' was reviewed. Data found to be interesting on this issue include polling by VTsIOM in January 2001 at a time when, as detailed in chapter two, support for the Chechen war was still relatively high, but at the same time, some dissent could begin to be seen against Putin's policies. This data came also in relation to the Parliamentary elections of December 1999 and the Presidential elections of 2000.

(Graph 12):[288]

[287] Question: 'If for you the attitude of deputies to the State Duma on the Chechen war is important, for who would you vote for in future elections?' Possible answers: 1) The attitude of Duma deputies on the Chechen war is not important for me 2) I will vote for supporters of the war. 3) I will vote for opponents of the war 4) I do not accept participants in the elections 5) Difficult to answer. Surveys conducted by FOM, December 1994: 1353 respondents, and June 1995: 1368 respondents. http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/societas/Chechnya/truck_war/of19952509.

[288] Question: 'Which of these problems of our society demand more from you, and you consider most important?' Possible answers (Respondents could pick more than one): 1) Difficulty with drinking products, trade in necessities 2) Growth in prices 3) Unemployment 4) Crisis in the economy 5) Growth in criminality 6) Morality crisis 7) Worsening environment 8) Terrorism 9) Aggravation in national relations 10) Division between rich and poor 11) Threats from fascism and extremism 12) Corruption 13) Weakening state power 14) Conflict in leadership 15) Withholding of aid, pension, etc. 16) War actions in Chechnya 17) Other 18) Difficult to answer. 2410 respondents separated into professed voting blocks for December 1999 Parliamentary elections. VTsIOM, *Monitoring obchshestvennogo mneniia*, VTsIOM, No. 2, Vol. 52, Mart-Aprel' 2001, p. 74.



As seen, those who supported the Union of Right Forces (SPS) and Yabloko (Yavlinsky's party) most considered the Chechen war to be a problem for Russian society. Those who supported Putin's Unity Block were above average in considering the war to be a problem, while all other major parties seem to be roughly average. Since the SPS and 'Yabloko' were considered the most progressive parties in support of reform, it seems that, predictably, those most politically active also consider the Chechen war as a problem for society. Those who did not accept any party from the elections seem also not to see the Chechen war as a problem; perhaps they were also the most rebellious of the survey group. Respondents who were not able to participate were relatively worried about the war. If they were not able to participate in the election, they might have thought themselves to have a lack of a 'voice' in this issue as well.

There is another point to note in discussion of this divide. Sirke Makinen studied the claims and reasoning of the four Russian political parties-of-power between 1999-2001. Her conclusions should be noted herein. Makinen examined the claims, reasoning, and argument types of

politicians heading: Nash Dom – Rossiia, Otechestvo, Edinstvo, and Yabloko. She found that, while party leaders differentiated substantially on the first war in Chechnya, for the second war, all parties argue for the 'integrity, unity, [and] wholeness of the Russian Federation.'[289]

Further:

> 'During the second Chechen war the main threat to integrity (and to security and constitutional order) was no longer 'pure' Chechen separatism; the fight against *terrorism* was almost unanimously seen as the key factor safeguarding the integrity of the Federation.'[290]

Unique for Yabloko, however, 'the end does not justify the means.'[291] That is to say that Yabloko are most willing to call for a political solution, as opposed to a military solution.

This has relevance in the context of this thesis in reinforcing the image of Yabloko as a more progressive party. As found in data above (Graphs 11 and 12), both the people and the politicians behind particularly Yabloko also saw the Chechen war as a 'problem.' In comparison, people who followed parties closer in policy to the Kremlin (and including Unity itself) tended to accept the Chechen war, and to in effect dismiss it as a military problem and not a problem of society.

Next we should look at the data concerning whom respondents voted for in the Presidential election of 2000 and compare them to their responses on consideration of the Chechen war as a 'problem.'

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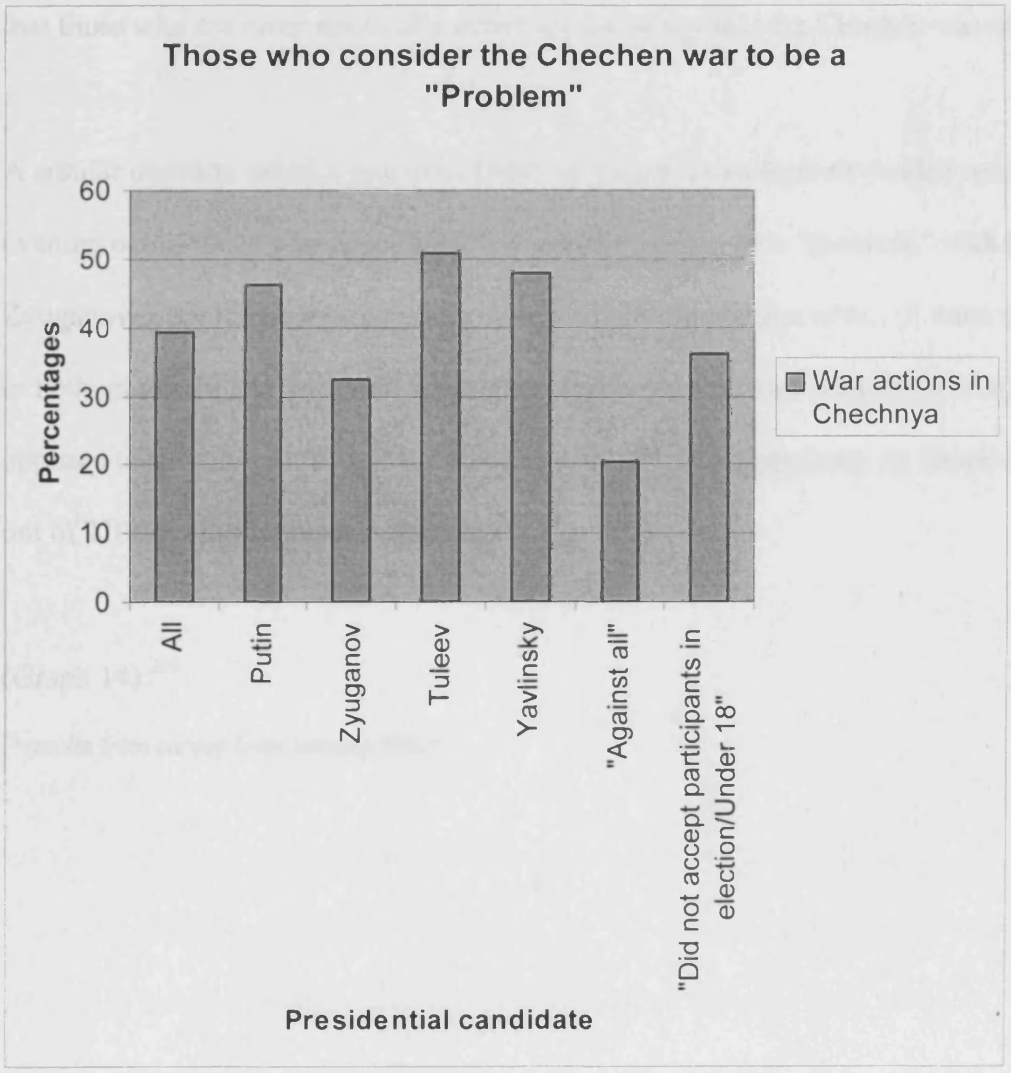
[289] Makinen, Sirke, 'Russia's Integrity: Russian Parties of Power and the Yabloko Association on Russo-Chechen Relations, 1999-2001,' *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 56, No. 8, Dec. 2004, p. 1181-2. (pp. 1157-1189)
[290] *Ibid*, p. 1182.
[291] *Ibid*, p. 1183.

(Graph 13):[292]

(*results from survey from January 2001)



There seems to be a relationship between the war issue and those who professed to support Putin and those who supported the Communist candidate Zyuganov. Apparently, fewer of those who

[292] Question: 'Which of these problems of our society demand more from you, and you consider most important?' Possible answers (Respondents could pick more than one): 1) Difficulty with drinking products, trade in necessities 2) Growth in prices 3) Unemployment 4) Crisis in the economy 5) Growth in criminality 6) Morality crisis 7) Worsening environment 8) Terrorism 9) Aggravation in national relations 10) Division between rich and poor 11) Threats from fascism and extremism 12) Corruption 13) Weakening state power 14) Conflict in leadership 15) Withholding of aid, pension, etc. 16) War actions in Chechnya 17) Other 18) Difficult to answer. 2410 respondents separated into professed voting blocks for Presidential candidates in 2000 election. VTsIOM, *Monitoring obshchestvennogo mneniie*, No. 2, Vol. 52, Mart-Aprel' 2001, p. 74.

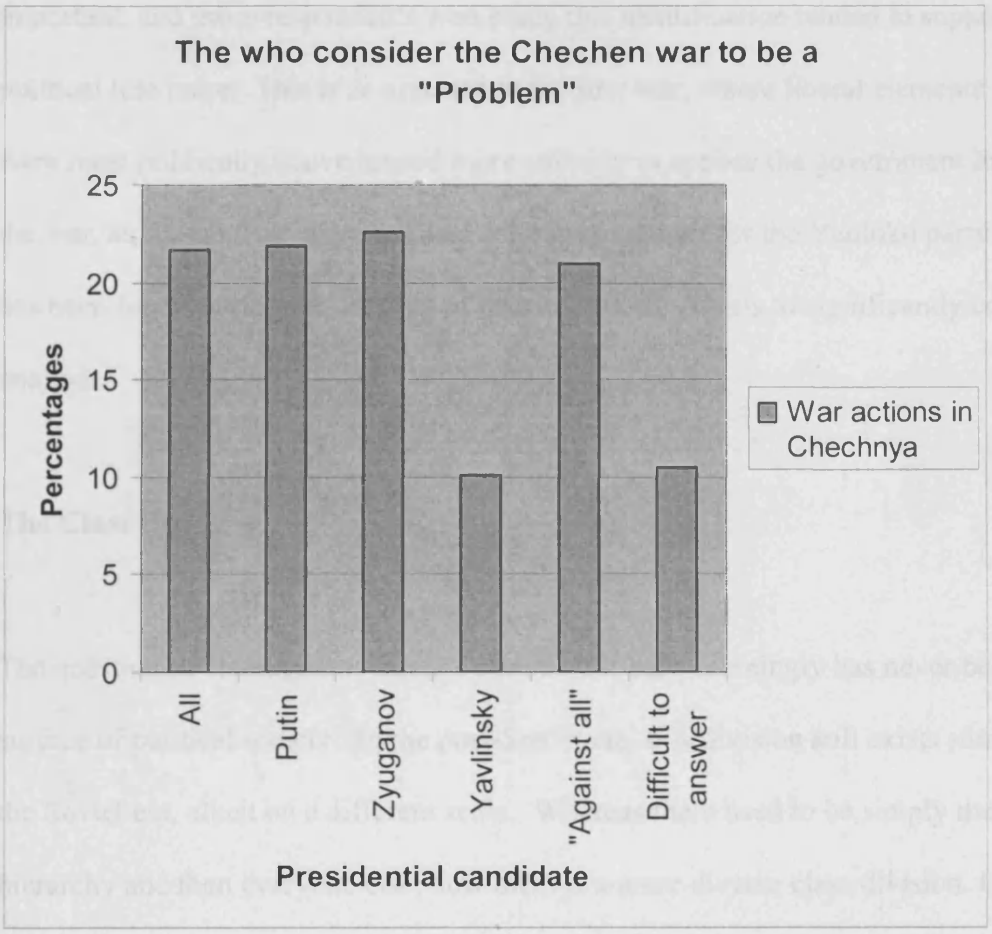
professed to vote for Zyuganov thought that the Chechen war was a problem. Those who voted for Tuleev or Yavlinsky however thought that the Chechen war was more of a problem than Putin's supporters. Because especially Yavlinsky is commonly seen as the biggest supporter of open democracy and reform in Russia, then this seems to be in line with the previous assertion that those who are more politically active tended to say that the Chechen war was a problem.

A similar question asked a year later (without Tuleev as an option) yielded results showing an evening out of those who considered the Chechen war to be a "problem," with both Putin and Zyuganov supporters considering the conflict according to that term. (It must also be noted that in both graphs 13 and 14, Putin supporters represented the vast majority of respondents, as opposed to Yavlinsky who had a diminishing number of supporters. In Graph 14, only 39 people out of 2106 professed support for him.)

(Graph 14):[293]

(*results from survey from January 2002)

[293] Question: 'Which of these problems of our society demand more from you, and you consider most important?' Graph reflects answer 19: War actions in Chechnya. 2106 respondents separated into professed voting blocks for Presidential candidates in 2000 election. VTsIOM, *Monitoring obchshestvennogo mneniia*, No. 2, Vol. 58, Moskva, Mart-Aprel' 2002, p. 84.



In both wars, as can be seen above, it must be noted that the Communists remained close to the government line in both conflicts. Yavlinsky and his 'Yabloko' party has in both instances been the first opponents of conflict (although in the final graph, Yavlinsky supporters seemed to lose interest in the war), while parties supporting Yeltsin and Putin have always provided the baseline of support depending on the relationship to the administration. This is in line with other data in this thesis showing that those who consider the Chechen war to be an important problem also support Putin.

Based on past research and on these statistics, if recognition of the Chechen issue as a 'problem' equates to the acknowledgement of it as a political dilemma, then it is therefore fairly reliable to assert that there is a difference here regarding the two wars in Chechnya. Particularly in the second war, those who were more politically active often regarded the Chechen war as more

important, and those respondents who made this identification tended to support the government political line more. This is as opposed to the first war, where liberal elements and those who were most politically active tended more strongly to oppose the government line, and therefore the war, as shown from previous data following support for the Yabloko party. Little evidence has been found during the conduct of research for this thesis to significantly countermand this analysis.

The Class Divide

The question of class, given Russia's communist past, seemingly has never been too far from the surface of political society. In the post-Soviet era, this division still exists somewhat as it did in the Soviet era, albeit on a different scale. Whereas there used to be simply the elite/party hierarchy and then everyone else, now there is a more diverse class division. On one side there are still the workers and small-scale sellers who usually have little beyond a paltry wage and some lessening hope of a pension and health care. On the other side, there are the intellectuals, large business owners, tycoons and standard level businessmen, who have education and opportunities to become rich (if they have not already), live overseas and own British football teams.

What can we learn about this cleavage to give a better understanding of Russian public opinion and the Chechen wars?

Again, looking at our extensive VTsIOM *Express* data concerning those who in late 1999 and in 2000 expressed oppositional opinions to the use of Federal troops in Chechnya, we can discover some matters of interest.[294]

[294] Data from the following two graphs reflect responses to a group of questions asked of respondents in sequence. The 'overall' line represents 100% and the other lines represent sections of the 'overall' line. Question 1: 'Do you

Available survey data separates respondents into six groups: Managers, Specialists, Employees, Qualified Workers, Students and Pensioners. For purposes of this examination, managers, specialists and qualified workers will be graphed into a higher class, while employees, students and pensioners will be grouped into a lower class (No data unfortunately accompanies this for unskilled workers or the unemployed). While this distinction is by no means universal, it does suggest a basis on externally proven skill and wealth that might allow for some analysis to be made.

As seen from the following graph, it seems that qualified workers have a higher trend towards the strongest response for removing Federal troops from the war.

(Graph 15):

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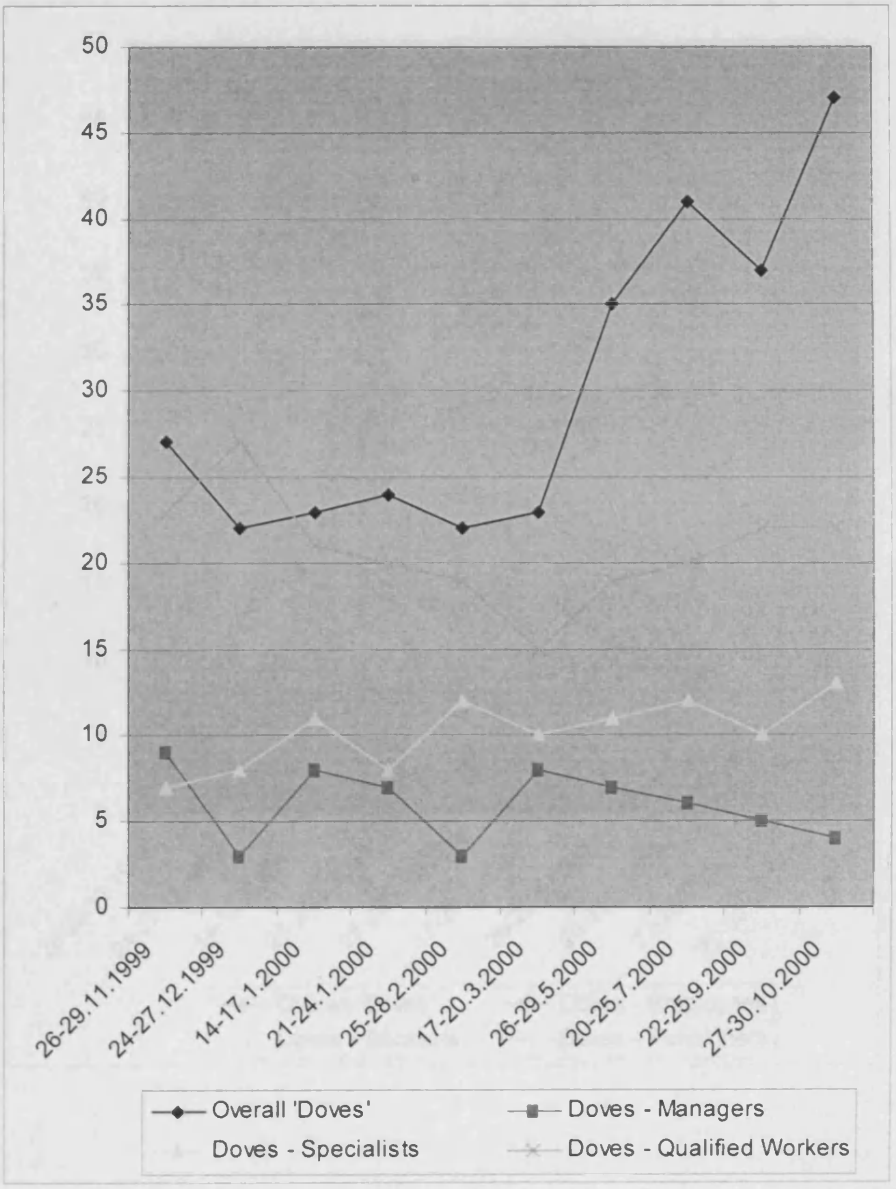
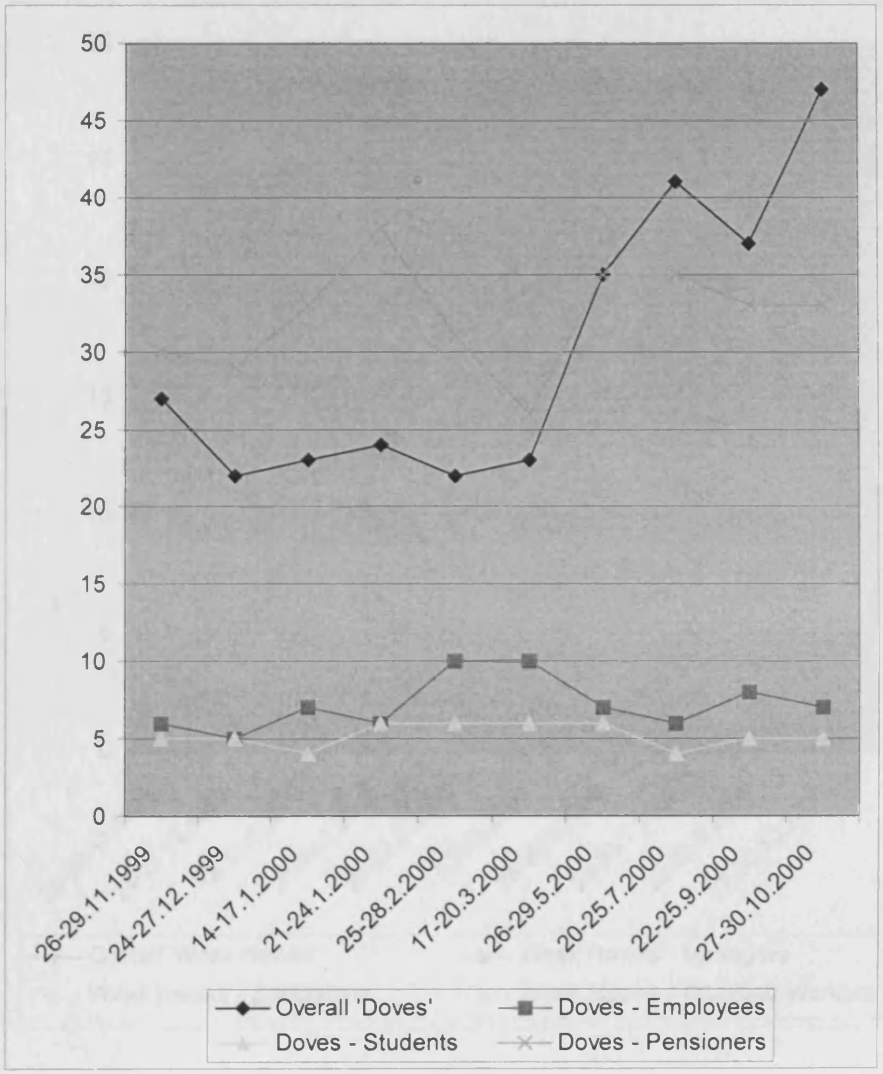
think the offensive operation of Federal troops in Chechnya should continue or peace negotiations with the leaders of Chechnya should start?' Possible answers: 1) Continue the approach of Federal troops 2) Enter into negotiations with Chechen leadership 3) Difficult to answer. The data in Graphs 15 and 16 reflects those who answered with number 2 from this question. Those who answered with Answers 1 or 3 were asked a second question. Follow-up question: 'And if the troops continue to suffer heavy losses in the offensive operation, do you think that the offensive operation should nevertheless continue in Chechnya, or in this case it would be necessary to start peace talks with the leaders in Chechnya?' Possible answers: 1) Continue the approach of Federal troops 2) Enter into negotiations with Chechen leadership 3) Difficult to answer. The data in Graphs 17 and 18 reflects those who answered with Answer 2 in Follow-up question. The implication is that those who answered with answer 1, to continue the war operation no matter the cost, are considered 'strong hawks' as opposed to the 'weak hawks' as designated. In this survey data, respondents were also separated according to background: 1) Managers 2) Specialists 3) Employees 4) Qualified Workers 5) Students 6) Pensioners. VTsIOM, surveys are on average of 1600 respondents with fewer answering the follow-up question. Data from: VTsIOM Express Polls 1999-16,1999-21, 2000-3, 2000-4, 2000-9. 2000-13, 2000-16, 2000-18, 2000-21, 2000-22. http://sofist.socpol.ru/. See also: VTsIOM, *Monitoring obchshestvennogo mneniia*, VCIOM Press Ltd., No. 6, Vol. 50, Moskva, Noiabr-Dekabr 2000, p. 49, table 2.



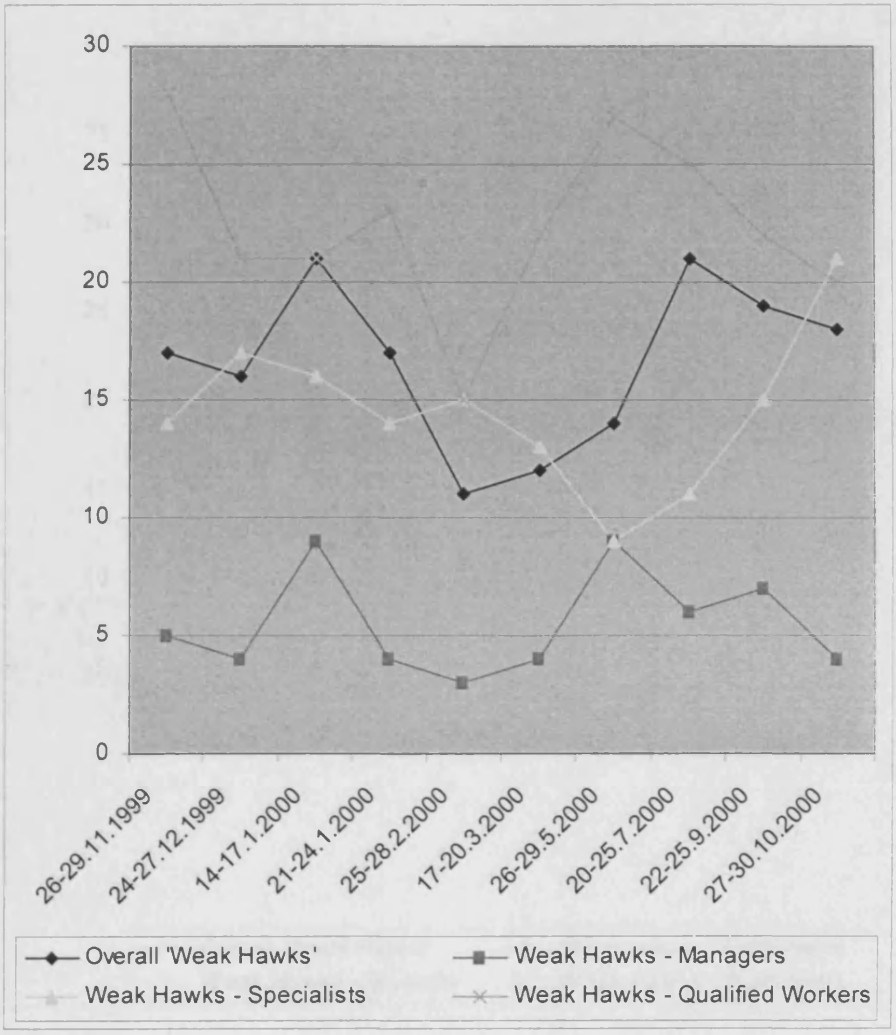
Likewise, as in the following graph, pensioners seem to have a large 'dove' response:

(Graph 16):



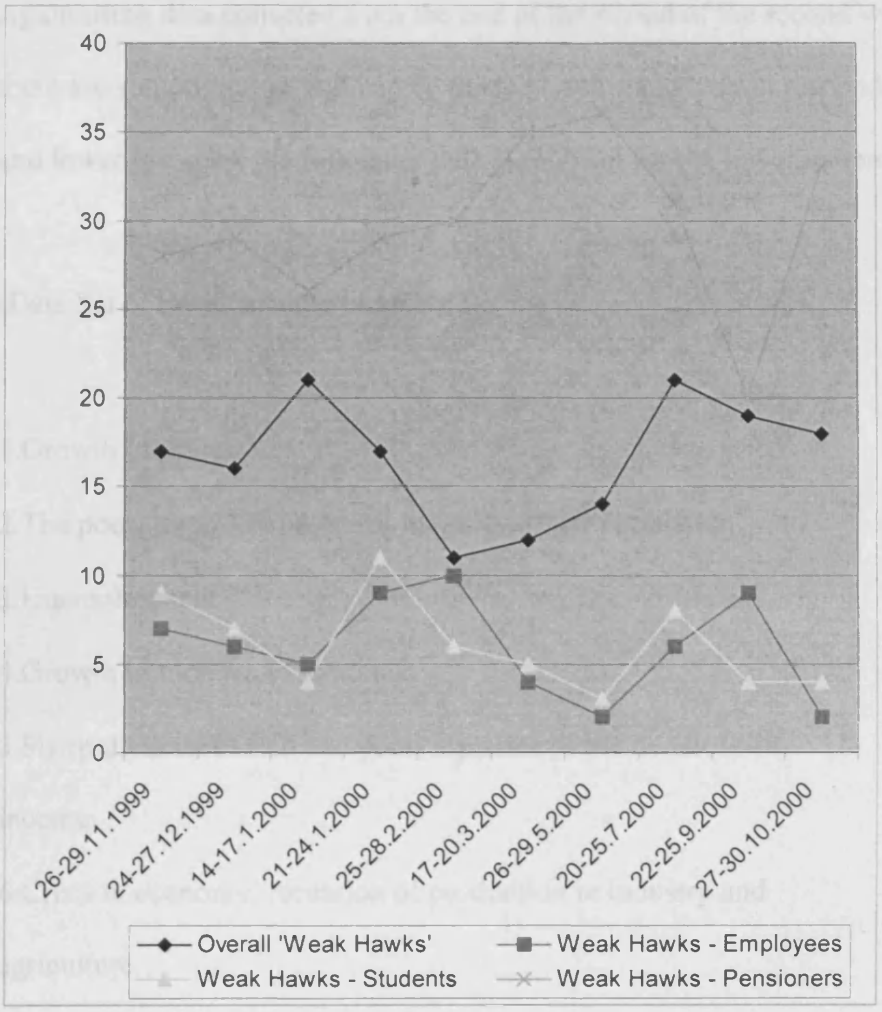
In the 'weak hawk' category, those who would pull troops out only if they suffered casualties, while initially supporting the operation, qualified workers, and to a lesser extent managers, tend to follow general public opinion in this regard. Specialists, on the other hand, seem to be skyrocketing in this category:

(Graph 17):



In the lower class segments, students and employees seem to have a relative correlation to averages in overall public opinion. Pensioners tend to make up a higher percentage of the weak hawks than overall public opinion.

(Graph 18):



So what do these graphs tell us? The conclusions tell us that pensioners typically tend to have a louder voice in survey data on what was considered a minority viewpoint than other segments. Also, it is interesting how qualified workers make up large percentages of the 'dove' response. Presumably, qualified workers are better educated, make more money, and so are better able to make a 'qualified' judgement on the war issue. Other connections are not so obvious. Data referred to has a typical 'difficult to answer' response of around 10% overall which could skew some percentages off track.

Again using data collected from the end of the period of the second war[295] studied for this thesis, there are some findings that can be made. Looking strictly at respondents with higher, middle, and lower incomes, the following data is relevant for the lower income brackets:

(Data Set 6: **lower** income bracket):

1.Growth of prices	82
2.The poor, impoverishment of majority of the population	67
3.Unemployment	47
4.Growth in number of criminals	42
5.Sharp division of rich and poor, injustice of the divisions in income	33
6.Crisis in economy, recession of production in industry and agriculture	30
6.Lack of access to education	30
8.Growth in narcotics	29
9.Lack of access to medical services	28
10.Crisis of morals, culture, morality	18
11.Corruption, bribery	17
12.Worsening composition of environment	15
12.Threat of explosions and other terrorist attacks in the place where you live	15
14. War actions in Chechnya	**14**

[295] Question: 'Which of these problems of our society demand more from you, and you consider most important?' Possible answers as in data sets (Multiple answers could be given). 2107 respondents: broken down for analysis according to higher (383), middle (1227) and lower (340) income groups. VTsIOM, *Monitoring obchshestvennogo mneniia,* VCIOM Press Ltd., Vol. 5, No. 61, Moskva, Sentiabr'- Oktiabr 2002, p. 81.

15.Delay in payment of salary, pension, aid	13
16.Weakness, Helplessness of state power	9
17.Growth in nationalism, worsening international relations	5
18.Difficult to answer	3
19.Conflicts in leadership of the country	1
19.Other	1
21.Limits in citizens' rights, democratic freedoms (Freedom of speech, press)	>0

While this is the case for respondents with a middle income:

(Data Set 7: **middle** income bracket):

1.Growth of prices	72
2.The poor, impoverishment of majority of the population	61
3.Growth in number of criminals	42
4.Lack of access to medical services	35
5.Crisis in economy, recession of production in industry and agriculture	32
6.Sharp division of rich and poor, injustice of the divisions in income	31
7.Unemployment	30
8.Growth in narcotics	29
9.Crisis of morals, culture, morality	28
10.Lack of access to education	25

11.Corruption, bribery	22
12. War actions in Chechnya	**17**
13.Weakness, Helplessness of state power	15
14.Worsening composition of environment	14
14.Threat of explosions and other terrorist attacks in the place where you live	14
16.Delay in payment of salary, pension, aid	11
17.Growth in nationalism, worsening international relations	10
18.Conflicts in leadership of the country	2
19.Other	1
19.Limits in citizens' rights, democratic freedoms (Freedom of speech, press)	1
19.Difficult to answer	1

And this is the case for those respondents in the higher brackets:

(Data Set 8: **higher** income bracket):

1.Growth of prices	58
2.The poor, impoverishment of majority of the population	55
3.Growth in number of criminals	47
4.Growth in narcotics	37
5.Unemployment	32
6.Crisis in economy, recession of production in industry and agriculture	31

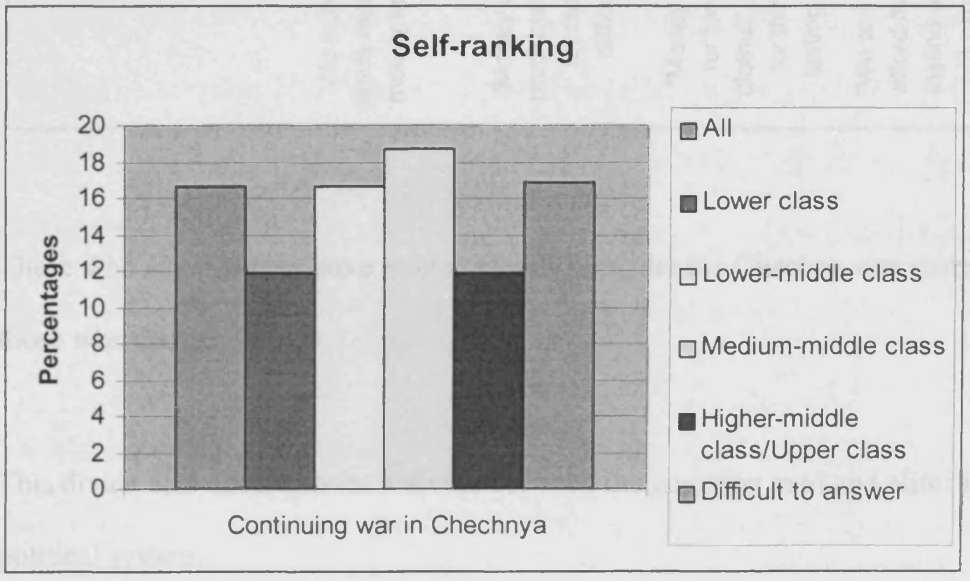
6.Corruption, bribery	31
8.Crisis of morals, culture, morality	30
9.Worsening composition of environment	27
10.Lack of access to medical services	21
10.Lack of access to education	21
12.Sharp division of rich and poor, injustice of the divisions in income	19
13.Weakness, Helplessness of state power	17
14.Threat of explosions and other terrorist attacks in the place where you live	17
15. War actions in Chechnya	**15**
16.Growth in nationalism, worsening international relations	12
17.Delay in payment of salary, pension, aid	6
18.Conflicts in leadership of the country	5
19.Limits in citizens' rights, democratic freedoms (Freedom of speech, press)	2
20.Other	1
21.Difficult to answer	>0

As can be seen, along income brackets, there is no clear distinction in opinion either according to rank or percentage. Growth on prices, poverty of the population and criminality rank one, two, three, except in the lower income bracket where unemployment became the third–ranked concern, i.e. more than criminality. Outside the realm of this thesis, perhaps this shows that those in the middle and highest income brackets have the least concern for their place in those brackets. Those in the lowest income brackets have the least job security.

Along these lines is the presupposition that those who are educated probably occupy the middle and highest income brackets, and worry the least about job security. However, as said before, from the data here, there is little correlation to regard for the Chechen war as a problem.

When asked according to what "class" in which respondents put themselves instead of according to stated income, results are slightly different:

(Graph 19):[296]

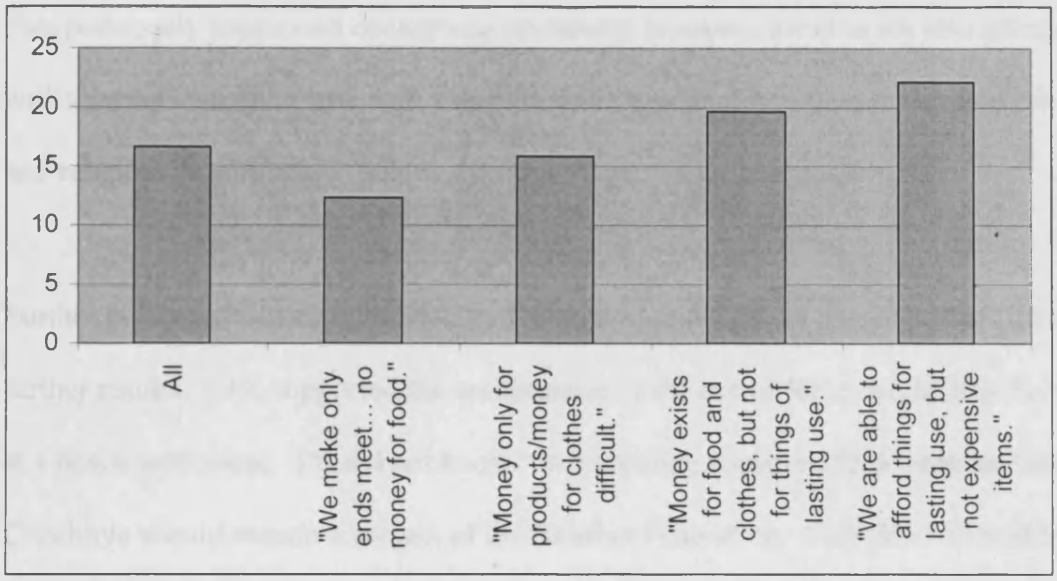


Clearly, people who considered themselves to be lower class also regarded the Chechen war less of a consideration. Interestingly, those in the highest class also shared this position. The same holds true when also asking the question as to the existence of money as a problem for respondents.

[296] Question: 'Which of these problems of our society demand more from you, and you consider most important?' Possible answers as in graph. 2107 respondents: broken down for analysis according to statement of class: Lower class (303), Lower-Middle class (598), Medium-Middle class (934), and Higher-Middle Class/Upper class (108), also 'Difficult to answer' (165). VTsIOM, *Monitoring obchshestvennogo mneniia*, VCIOM Press Ltd., Vol. 5, No. 61, Moskva, Sentiabr'- Oktiabr 2002, p. 86.

(Graph 20):[297]

(*According to those who consider the Chechen war to be a "Problem.")



Those who say that they have money clearly consider the Chechen war more of an issue than those who do not.

This divide also encompasses a divide between the common man and elites in the Russian political system.

In November 2000, ROMIR polling of what those that the polling agency terms to be 'elite,' encompassing 650 people representing executive and legislature bodies of the Russian Federation, the business structures and the state enterprises, sciences and the mass media, produced interesting results. The highest percentage, 28% find that corruption is the biggest problem of safety in Russia. 23% find that economic problems are most important. Following that, the next highest answers are: the unstable political situation in Russia (21%), NATO (17%),

[297] Question: 'Which of these problems of our society demand more from you, and you consider most important?' 2107 respondents: broken down for analysis according to statement of money demand: 460, 848, 660, and 133 respondents respectively. VTsIOM, *Monitoring obshchestvennogo mneniie*, VCIOM Press Ltd., Moscow, 2002, Vol. 5, No. 61, Sentiabr'- Oktiabr 2002, p. 86.

Islamic fundamentalism (16%), International terrorism (15%), the break between the centre and the regions (15%), and the lack of ideology (14%). Although the disintegration of the state is a possible choice, only a token number choose this option.[298] This data shows that, much as in the data previously mentioned concerning all income brackets, the elite are also primarily occupied with economic matters, although some attention predictably is paid to the dangers of instability and religious fanaticism.

Further polling of this elite division by ROMIR specifically on the subject of Chechnya reveals further results. 63% supported the continuance of the use of force, while 30% favoured attempts at a peace settlement. 8% did not know. In a separate question, 92% believed 'absolutely' that Chechnya should remain a subject of the Russian Federation. Only 5% believed that other options were possible, while 3% did not know.[299] In many ways, these results reflect data concerning the overall population as examined in other chapters of this thesis. Elite response seems to be in line with overall public opinion in this respect.

Nevertheless, from the overall collection of information reviewed for this section, we find that there is no clear connection between class or income and even a consideration of the Chechen war as a problem, outside of data in which the respondents' own position in society is requested. Data researched mainly covers the second Chechen war, but yet something can be learned from this study. We find that in the context of the second war, no group significantly departs from overall opinion along such a cleavage. While some minor points could potentially be made, if the Chechen war has support in general society, then it can be inferred with a degree of accuracy that Russian society across class boundaries will also support the war. The possible exception is

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[298] ROMIR, 'Elita ob osnovnykh ugrozakh bezopasnosti Rossii,' November 2000, Survey of 650 elites (people representing executive and legislature bodies of the Russian Federation, the business structures and the state enterprises, sciences and the mass media) in 7 cities, Web site: http://web.archive.org/web/20010306204858/www.romir.ru/socpolit/vvps/12_2000/russia-threat.htm.

[299] ROMIR, 'Elita o krizise v Chechne,' November 2000, Survey of 650 elites (people representing executive and legislature bodies of the Russian Federation, the business structures and the state enterprises, sciences and the mass media) in 7 cities, Web site: http://www.romir.ru/socpolit/actual/12_2000/chechnya.htm.

that the relative percentages of pensioners to 'dove' and 'weak hawk' categories shown in the graphs are quite interesting, although seemingly not to be borne out as a genuine cleavage in reference other data and to analysis in the age and political divides.

As shown above also, more respondents who have a positive attitude towards their own life tend to consider the Chechen war to be a problem. On the other hand, if they have a negative attitude about their social class or their need for money (except for the pensioners case stated above), then they consider the conflict as less of an issue.

The Religious Divide

Within Russia and within the Russo-Chechen conflict, there is no doubt a substantial divide based on religion. Russian Christian Orthodoxy coming from the north and northwest and expanding Islam from the south has a long history of competition for followers in the Caucasus. Particularly in the northern Caucasus including Chechnya, Islam has a long history leading up until today.[300]

Within much of the rest of the Russian Federation, there is of course the prevalence of Russian Orthodox Christianity. Following the post-Soviet era, having endured 'religion-as-opium-for-the-masses' obsessively secular Communist ideology, there are indications that in Russian society, the relevance of religion is growing. As written by Igor Dubov:

> 'In the last fifteen years, the influence of religion on the life of Russian citizens has noticeably grown. Churches, mosques, and houses of prayer are being restored and opened; religious holidays are widely celebrated; and church services are broadcast on

[300] See: Dimaeva, 'Islam v sovremennoi chechenskoi respublike,' *Issledovanniia po prikladnoi i neotlozhnoi ethnologii*, Rossiiskaia akademiia nauk: Institute etnologii i antropologii, No. 159, Moskva, 2002.

television. Large numbers of Russian citizens have performed the rite of baptism; and more and more marriages are solemnized with a religious ceremony.'[301]

However, in the research for this thesis, there has been a lack of data separating respondents on the issue of the Chechen war along these dimensions. This is also in agreement with Dubov's work:

'At the same time, we must note that there is hardly any reliable information on the parameters used to measure the masses awareness of religion. Experts' periodic statements on what voters think of politicians' religious affiliation and commitment are as a rule, not supported by empirical data. This is caused by the absence of polls aimed at studying in-depth shifts in the religious consciousness of Russian citizens, rather than unwillingness to use the results of public opinion polls.'[302]

Along these lines, there is little data from research for this thesis and from the few polls that Dubov does note that can shed some light on this possible cleavage in Russian public opinion and the Chechen wars. In research for this thesis, few surveys have been found to ask, alongside the usual questions as discussed before dealing with gender, age, budget, class, education and so forth, about the religion of the respondent. Therefore, given this lack of original primary sources on this issue, little comment will be made on this cleavage in this chapter.

As this thesis deals with Russian public opinion, albeit meaning 'Russian' in the civic sense and not the religious/ethnic sense (outside of the previous ethnic 'divide' section), there is undoubtedly undocumented possibilities here concerning this cleavage, however there is not

[301] Dubov, Igor G., 'Level of Religious Commitment and the Influence of Religious Precepts on Russian Citizens' Attitudes Toward Political Leaders,' *Russian Social Science Review*, Vol. 44, No. 6, Nov-Dec 2003, p. 82. (pp. 82-107)
[302] *Ibid*, p. 83.

enough data spreading across regional lines as yet found on this subject to make any conclusions based on this cleavage.

There is one last point covered by Dubov which must be covered, however:

> 'It is clear [...] that many fewer Tatars in Russia as a whole sympathize with Muslim candidates than is true in Tatarstan. Tatars who live outside Tatarstan are also more willing than those who live in Tatarstan to say that they will support an Orthodox Christian candidate. In a similar way, Russians who live in Tatarstan are considerably less inclined to support an Orthodox Christian candidate than those who live outside Tatarstan and are, accordingly, much more loyal to Muslim politicians.'[303]

This perhaps demonstrates that any possible religious cleavage is less important than the regional cleavage where solidarity with tradition prevails, although, in the context of the religious nature of the Chechen conflict as to be discussed next, the impact of this on weighting cleavages is uncertain at best.

It must be mentioned that in the context of the Chechen struggle itself, the supposed Islamisation of the conflict has been studied previously. One such article discussing this point was written by Julie Wilhelmsen, in which she ultimately finds that:

> '[...]increasingly radical Chechen warlords in alliance with international Islamist forces on the one hand and hard and uncompromising Russian policies on the other have worked in tandem to trap the moderates in the Chechen separatist movement.'[304]

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[303] *Ibid*, p. 100.
[304] Wilhelmsen, Julie, 'Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The Islamisation of the Chechen Separatist Movement,' *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 57, No. 1, January 2005, p. 36. (pp. 35-59)

Wilhelmsen argues against any portrayal of the Chechen conflict as a general fundamentalist holy war, instead pointing out that:

> 'The internal impetus towards Islamisation of the Chechen separatist movement did not come from the Chechen population in general but rather from a group of warlords and politicians who acquired prominent positions in Chechnya because of the war.'[305]

Furthermore, Elise Giuliano finds in another article that, as a people, Russian Muslims have little connection between themselves even as any type of *potential* congruent force:

> 'Although some Russian Muslims (including the radical Wahhabis) seem to define their identity in terms of opposition to the Russian central state, most Muslims in Russia do not share political goals or attitudes with Muslims living beyond the borders of their own republics. Nor have Muslims mobilized as coherent political blocs within their own republics. The fact that there seems to be little common political interest among Russia's Muslims and little political mobilization along Islamic lines suggests that the "infection" of Islam that President Putin spoke of, spreading from the Caucasus up the Volga River to destroy the integrity of the Russian Federation, is as implausible an outcomes as Russia's leaders suddenly shedding their fear of Islam.'[306]

These arguments are found within the context of this thesis to be true. In fact, as covered in the previous section on ethnic divisions, there has been found to be little support for any kind of cultural nationalism or separatism in the general population. Instead, most separatist movements were radicalized based on political reasoning. Support for the Chechen separatist movement however has come to base itself on Islam for financial reasons (because of support from outside

[305] *Ibid*, p. 37.
[306] Giuliano, Elise, 'Islamic Identity and Political Mobilization in Russia: Chechnya and Dagestan Compared,' *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 2, Summer 2005, pp. 215-216. (pp. 195-220)

internationalist religious influences) where the rebellion was at one time primarily focused on political principles. This is not to say they did not want the freedom to practice their own culture, of course they did, but there is little evidence to show that they wanted separatism based on purely locally-based cultural grounds (if, it must be added, that was ever even possible).

Conclusions

In this chapter, eight cleavages have been discussed to varying degrees of effectiveness on the subject of conflicts in Chechnya, as well as their each group's relationships to Russian public opinion.

Some cleavages have been found to be more revealing in data than others in Russian public opinion on the Chechen war issue. In level of political activity, data on the gender divide has been found to be quite important. More generally, the ethnic and age divides as issues have been found to have a substantial bearing on understanding opinion on Chechen policy.

As opposed to this, class and especially the rural/urban divide have been found to be less important in examination of this issue. As shown in corresponding sections, there is little substantive difference in data focusing on these divides. It is however necessary to note that those who think that they are affluent or in the middle classes tend to think more about the Chechen war.

More difficult to gauge have been the political, regional and religious divides. For discerning new conclusions, sufficient data for independent analysis has not yet been found.

Ultimately, support (or lack thereof) for the Chechen war has been relative to changing opinions in sections of society. Opinion has been difficult to correlate overall as shown by polling data, and study of exactly who does and does not support the war adds a new level of understanding to academia in relation to the topic of this thesis.

A summary is hereby in order to conclude this chapter:

- Ethnic Divide:

As befitting an ongoing war partially over the ethnic divide, research for this thesis finds that the ethnic divide primarily still exists on the basis of a 'minorities vs. the centre' concept. On a societal level, although there is not enough data to further sub-divide study (Northern Ossetians vs. Chechens; Cossacks vs. Chechens; etc.), as demonstrated there is an ethnic tendency inherent for the war in Chechnya relative to the imperial centre (Russians) and the separatist movement (Chechens). In a more general sense, this extends in regard to the people of the North Caucasus (Russians vs. the North Caucasian ethnicities).

- Gender Divide:

There is a clear basis for a gender divide in Russian public opinion. Females are more likely to be against the war initially (see Graph 3), and the overall percentage of peace support rises when males join females in this respect. Results are indeterminate in regard to those who turn against the war in the case of heavy casualties (see Graph 2, the 'weak hawks'), although on at least one occasion the total percentage of so-called 'soft supporters' has risen in relation to a rising percentage of males in this category (the so-called 'closing the gap' question discussed in that

section). Furthermore, research by the author and by others has found that women are more likely to be against the war if they are mothers whose sons are involved in the conflict.

Particularly surrounding such groups as the Soldiers Mothers Groups and, at one time the politically active 'Women of Russia' party, women lead the way.

- Age Divide:

There is some basis for an age divide in Russian public opinion. Research has found some interesting conclusions within this cleavage. For instance, people in the middle age group (see final surveys of Graph 6) tend to be the determining factor in age-based examinations. At least in that data, for instance, the overall percentage of doves (those strongly against the war) does not rise in mid-2000 until the percentage of those 40 to 54 years old become involved as 'doves.'

- Rural/Urban Divide:

Despite extensive research, no connection has been conclusively found between support, opposition, or even interest in the war as a problem. Rural or urban residency seems to not be a significant factor on its own in a determination of Russian public opinion and the Chechen war. In the context of data for the second war, residents in Moscow and St. Petersburg, while not necessarily ranking the Chechen war higher as a 'problem,' do have higher real percentages of people concerned about the war. In this way, the rural/urban divide seems to have an impact within overall Russian public opinion.

- Regional Divide:

Due to lack of breakdowns in data according to precise region, no new conclusions can be found in regard to this cleavage beyond what points others have already determined.

- Political Divide:

The political divide is found to be a significant factor in assessing Russian public opinion and the Chechen wars. Unsurprisingly, those who support reformist and progressive parties also associate the Chechen war as a problem of Russian society. Research finds that those in support of the more conservative parties of Russian politics typically regard the conflict in Chechnya as less a problem. As stated by this and research by others however, there is a divergence in determining how to go forward, with most parties only agreeing that the integrity of the Russian Federation must be upheld.

- Class Divide:

The class divide is found to not be a significant factor in regard to the Chechen war, except by those who 'choose' their own classes. Research finds that all income groups generally rank Chechen war actions about equally, although there is some percentile differentiation.

- Religious Divide:

Due to lack of precise data according to religion, no conclusions can be found in regard to this cleavage.

Having analyzed these eight divides, what does this tell us about Russian public opinion and the Chechen war? Enough is discovered to find that, while some deviations exist in Russian public

opinion according to these cleavages, Russian society overall is remarkably accepting and unified in respect to the Chechen war, and especially to policies of the Putin administration and government on that issue. Research does not conclusively illustrate clear divisions in Russian public opinion on this matter.

To a determinable degree, one minor overall conclusion can be made. Ultimately opposition to the war seems to begin at the point in which a middle-aged politically active Russian male decides to end support for the administration and oppose the war to a higher degree, perhaps prompted by the potential of groups representing the Soldiers Mothers that bring the war 'home' to a more 'striking' degree. This is an expression of the overall volatility of Russian public opinion in general. Beyond this extremely limited statement, on-going events, the media and the sensitivity of the administration to public opinion (as to be explored in the next chapter) are the only determinates to over time affect support for war in Chechnya.

In overall analysis, judging from the results of study in this chapter (as well as from the results of chapter two), one enduring conclusion is that the dominance of the elite in Russian political society (at least within the time periods being studied) was alive and well in relation to 'general' public opinion, and to the cleavages therein, on the Chechen war issue.

Jason Vaughn

Chapter Four

The Question of Media Manipulation in Russian Public Opinion on the Chechen Wars

Introduction

The previous chapter examined cleavages in Russian public opinion and the Chechen wars. This chapter focuses on the media in relation to Russian elites, actors in Russian government and general public opinion on the Chechen wars. The 'question' of media manipulation will be found to not really be a question at all; particularly in the second Chechen war, the Russian government has perceived Russian public opinion as a threat to forceful policy, and has further perceived the media as a target representing the 'amplifier' of that threat.

The issues to be researched are:

- To what extent the Russian elites and the Russian government have tried to influence the perception of the Chechen wars in Russian public opinion.
- How has the Russian government tried, within the context of the two Russian presidential administrations, to portray each of the Chechen wars during the time periods studied?
- What is the role of the media in Russian political society?

First, to begin, there is a separation here that has continued throughout the chapters of this thesis. As stated previously in this thesis and as mentioned briefly above, military operations in Chechnya have been conducted under two separate Russian presidential administrations. As

covered in chapter two, the first war was undoubtedly less popular than the second war in Chechnya, at least in the time period studied in this thesis.

Some reasons for this difference in popular support include, as to be alleged in this chapter, the failure of the Russian government before the first war to prepare adequately Russian public opinion for the amount of pressure involved in a major protracted military conflict. Also, during the conflict, the Russian government under Yeltsin failed to justify the war and to maintain further a realistically believable public relations campaign to make the grim pictures seen in the Russian media seem remotely justified. The managed portrayal of the Chechen war sought by the Yeltsin administration, built without careful planning, fell like a house of cards before the hard truths presented by reporters investigating the conflict and in the face of the Chechens' own portrayal of the conflict.

From a review of Russian governmental actions in the PR sphere for the second war, figures in the Russian government at the time apparently saw this 'weakness' in the case of the first Chechen war and decided that, should another conflict take place, these mistakes should and would be rectified. Blame was at that point placed on the media.

Before and during the second war, this chapter will argue that the Putin administration stepped up efforts to 'manage' Russian public opinion through a focussed policy encompassing many facets to restrain the media. While the government and military's efforts have indeed been slightly more efficient in conducting the conflict, Putin wanted also to limit the risks in regard to even the possibility of stirring opposition in Russian public opinion. These policies did not address the likelihood of damaging freedoms and the future of democracy in Russia, and indeed this study finds both to have taken place.

Freedom House has documented this trend against media freedom, as Steven Fish charts in his book, Democracy Derailed in Russia.[307] However, this chapter seeks to take a fresh look at this on the Chechen war issue.

To some extent to be further examined, this has led to authoritarianism in Russia. The state has sought to what degree it can to allow only its overall viewpoint on the Chechen war to be presented. Some examples of this, to be explored further throughout this chapter, include policies to only allow reporters closely following the guidelines of the state to be able to report on the war from first-hand accounting. Some reporters, such as the soon-to-be-discussed Anna Politkovskaya, have had to fear for their lives in order to present a contradictory viewpoint to the state's view. Indeed, outside the purview of this paper, Politkovskaya was murdered under suspicious circumstances in her own apartment block in 2006.

Media ownership and the financial positions of various actors in the Russian political sphere have also come into play on this question. In the immediate post-Soviet era, there was a new openness that was not possible before. Independence of the media expanded the realms of journalism and information distribution in general society to an unprecedented degree. However, where some wished for contemporary Western-styled freedom of the press without government guidance, many times there seemed like a type of anarchy to other observers that should not be tolerated.

Yet, it is also a fact that in these years, the Russian government has been aided by the status of the economy. Given that there are few businesses, collected into conglomerates, which are capable of buying advertisements but are also independent of government influence, operating costs have over the years caused Russian media outlets to have to seek funding from wherever

[307] Fish, M. Steven, Democracy Derailed in Russia, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York, 2005, p. 75.

possible, including the more biased governmental and business organizations. Therefore, Russian politicians and business leaders have begun to eat away at the exceptional (or chaotic, depending on your point of view) journalistic autonomy present during the immediate post-Soviet period.

Andrew Wilson, in his book Virtual Politics, refers back to the use of *dramaturgiia* in Russian society to explain the reasoning behind many on-going policies:

> 'Conspiracies, parties, tendencies and 'isms' – some phantom, some real – were constantly paraded as the justification, the *dramaturgiia* (dramatic art, the moving spirit of a drama), for moving events.'[308]

This has relevance in examining the attempted portrayal of each Chechen war by the Russian presidential administrations conducting them. Also, Wilson focuses on how the idea of *dramaturgiia* is especially important in Russian elections cycles, where more is demanded of 'political technologists' (those who attempt to portray a specific media design for a policy or politician) than simply to make them appealing to the public. In the post-Soviet era, he finds that such technologists must also:

> '[...]disguise the preservation of the old structures of power and their fusion with 'new' business opportunities, creating a giant state holding company, a permanent revolving door for melding political and economic power.'[309]

[308] Wilson, Andrew, Virtual Politics: Faking Democracy in the Post-Soviet World, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2005, p. 7.
[309] *Ibid*, p. 49.

On this level of politics as theatre, Wilson further finds that *dramaturgiia* must adapt to changing circumstances to be successful, using the *unity* of the United Russia party and their 2001 fusion with Fatherland All-Russia as one example. Another example is how:

> 'Unity's 1999 [parliamentary] campaign had skilfully presented the party as both a new virtual power and a virtual opposition.'[310]

This portrayal of Russian post-Soviet politics as a moving charade will be useful to consider as this chapter progresses. Somewhat opposing this however is to notice how the media also has quantitatively widened its scope relative to the government's desired perception in society. Expansion in media sources is at this point useful to consider.

The number of newspapers in Russia grew substantially before and during the time periods studied. In 1998, there were over 1,000 more titles in circulation than in 1980, but with less than one quarter the circulation.[311] As discussed by Stephen Lovell:

> 'Newspapers and journals were confronted by a rapidly changing and diversifying audience on whose support their continued existence suddenly depended. Most publications, moreover, lacked the know-how and means to conduct sophisticated audience research. As a result, many had closed or been on the brink of extinction. Nevertheless, the situation in the mid-1990s was not catastrophic, as some commentators have implied. The Moscow reading public was able to support a remarkable number of daily and weekly newspapers. But the importance of post-Soviet newspapers extended well beyond the major cities. Many commentators were struck by the growing demand

[310] *Ibid*, p. 108.
[311] Rantanen, Terhi, The Global and the National, Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham MD and Boulder CO, 2002, p. 31.

for the local press, which was cheaper than its national counterpart and focused more closely on people's real social concerns.'[312]

Television outlets also became a tradable commodity in this ongoing game between the government and the media during both wars. As the economy improved in late Soviet times and into the post-Soviet era, the basis for television as the primary medium for information distribution became stronger.

The influence of television seemed quite powerful, as written by Sarah Oates:

> 'Trained in the Soviet period to approach media sources with cautious scepticism, Russian viewers show a great deal of insight into the attempts to manipulate their opinion. By the same token, they cannot avoid being influenced, particularly by the powerful state-run television on Channel 1.'[313]

As pertaining to the competition of newspapers against television and radio, as found by N. I. Lapin, those who read the newspaper 'every day' fell from 54% in 1990 to 17% in 2002, while those who watched television rose from 50% in 1990 to 53% in 2002. Those who listened to radio every day also rose from 40% in 1990 to 48% in 2002.[314]

There were also many indications that the internet was becoming stronger as an alternative source of information. Despite ROMIR polling in July 2000 that revealed statistics as stating that 99% of Russian citizens had no home internet access, only 4% have internet at work, and

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[312] Lovell, Stephen, The Russian Reading Revolution, Macmillan Press Ltd, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 2000, p. 151.
[313] Oates, Sarah, Television, Democracy and Elections in Russia, Routledge, London and New York, 2006, p. 127.
[314] Lapin, N.I., 'How the Citizens of Russia Feel and What They Are Striving For,' *Russian Social Science Review*, Vol. 45, No. 6, Nov.-Dec. 2004, p. 17. (pp. 4-21)

that only single digit percentages use electronic mail on any regular basis, there was significant evidence that the internet was growing as a source of information.[315]

Having the virtue of the state being almost unable to regulate it, the fact that the number of internet users in Russia rose from 406 thousand people in 1996 to 2.5 million people in 1999[316] was surely a warning sign for any elements of the Russian government wishing to have at least the nominal capacity to censor news. The increasing modernization of Russia strongly suggests that the number of internet users will increase as infrastructure improves. Although still not amounting to even a respectable level of competition against other sources of information for Russians, especially outside major cities, this form of communication became a strong factor in the information war for public opinion during the second Chechen conflict. Eventually, a variety of web sites would become the sole methods of information dissemination for the Chechen side in Russia, outside of the propaganda of various supportive groups in foreign countries.[317]

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[315] ROMIR, 'Rossiiane i internet,' Web site: http://web.archive.org/web/20001018221716/www.romir.ru/market/internet/07_2000/internet.htm. This polling was conducted in July 2000 of a nationally representative sample of 2000 Russians in 40 federal entities.
[316] Rantanen, Terhi, The Global and the National, p. 36.
[317] See http://www.kavkazcenter.com for one example of the Chechen side. Up-to-date as of 20 March 2005.

See also: on the Russian side:
www.Chechnya.ru
www.antiterror.ru
www.infocentre.ru
www.kavkaz.ru

On the Chechen side:
www.kavkaz.org
www.qoqaz.net
www.amina.com
www.ichkeria.com
www.chechentimes.com

Thomas, Timothy L., 'Russian and Chechen 'Information War' Tactics,' *The Second Chechen War*, (ed.) Anne Aldis, Strategic and Combat Studies Institute, Conflict Studies Research Centre, Occasional Paper No. 40, Sandhurst, September 2000, p. 123.

Other sources agree in finding that internet sites continued to grow in popularity, particularly after mid-2000[318]. According to *Europemedia* in 2001:

> 'Internet users in Russia have grown 2.6 fold in the last two years with ongoing quarterly growth of between 7 and 10 percent.'[319]

Nevertheless, there is a significant percentage of Russians, especially outside the cities, who still do not have access to basic services, much less internet connections, hence this source of media is still of some limited value in spreading information.

The level of access to media shapes the environment in which many of the surveys, polls, and elections discussed in this thesis take place. As to be discussed, in the case of many Russian media outlets, the situation in these time periods was unstable at best, and at worst, they were perpetually vulnerable at the financial level. Since this is the environment, resulting effects on any debate of Russian public opinion in relation to the war in Chechnya cannot and should not be overlooked.

First, this chapter will discuss manipulation during the first war, examining the government's position and then examining the media's response. After this, the issue of manipulation during the second war will be discussed, again concerning the government's position and then the media's resulting situation. Thirdly, a comparison of the two wars in the context of the previous sections will be conducted. Lastly, the effects of all this on Russian democracy will be analysed briefly followed by some final conclusions.

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[318] Bovt, Georgi, 'The Russian Press and Civil Society,' Civil Society and the Search for Justice in Russia, (eds.) Christopher Marsh and Nikolas K. Gvosdev, Lexington Books, Lanham MD, 2002, p. 96.
[319] 'Internet use enjoys steady growth in Russia,' *Europemedia*, 08 August 2001. http://www.nua.ie/surveys/index.cgi?f=VS&art_id=905357060&rel=true.

This chapter will ultimately find that the 'honeymoon' granted the media during the 1990s resulting from the chaos inherent to the fall of the Soviet Union has ended. In its place is a government less interested in principles of democracy and more interested in order, which as previously covered, has not been an unpopular concept in Russian public opinion.

Media Manipulation in the First War

This section finds that there was an attempt at manipulation of public opinion, but policies were largely inefficient and ineffective, and in some cases derisory. Failures in initiating and conducting the war were apparent, and demonstrated often the negligence of Russian leaders, perhaps most in particular, President Boris Yeltsin himself.

- The government position

Past experiences with media policy (and lack thereof) leading up to the first war influenced directly the government's initial position on the media for the conflict.

The introduction of independent media in the late-1980s and early 1990s forced Soviet, and then Russian, state-owned media to have to back down from 'false official versions of events,'[320] thereby ensuring that the government had to work harder to promote itself to the Russian people. If the government was to fully realize this, for the first time, the 'democratic' Russian state had to have a real media policy, internally and externally. In this regard, on the effort of the first Chechen war, the Russian government failed.

[320] Belin, Laura, 'Political Bias and Self-Censorship in the Russian Media,' Contemporary Russian Politics: A Reader, (ed.) Archie Brown, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001, p. 321.

As explained by David Wedgwood Benn, and while noting 'evidence of bias' during the 1993 Constitution crisis, Russian media was in prime position by the beginning of the Chechen war:

> 'Yet barely a year later—during the Chechen crisis—the Russian media looked far more robust. The government now faced a problem not unlike that faced by the United States government during the Vietnam war. It was unable to impose a news blackout and was constantly confronted by journalists who refused to accept the official version of events.'[321]

From the time of Benn's writing (published in May 1996), life looked attractive for a media future in post-Soviet Russia:

> 'Yet it may fairly be said that the Russian media in the 1990s have been more diverse, more outspoken and more influential than at any previous time in the country's history. If this incipient freedom really does become an irreversible process, it will be one of the major events of the 20th century.'[322]

When dealing with the Chechen wars, Russia had to have a policy on independent journalism, which is something it did not really have to deal with in previous wars, namely Afghanistan of the Soviet era. Not realizing this truth before and during the first Chechen war, the Russian government had no workable media policy, outside of the apparent hope that the government would be listened to; that, in effect, it would be *obeyed* without consistent demonstrative threat or sanction for violations of rules. In the first war, this in reality meant that journalists were able to move all around Chechnya in a chaotic atmosphere, crossing battle lines at will or through

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[321] Benn, David Wedgwood, 'The Russian Media in Post-Soviet Conditions,' *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 3, May 1996, p. 473. (pp. 471-479)
[322] *Ibid*, p. 477.

bribery. Frequently, as will be covered, the threat was minimal of a journalist being jailed by the Russian government and therefore often an empty threat.

The government had an uneven position in respect to what media policy they did have. In the first few days of the first Chechen war, reporters did come under fire or have their equipment confiscated.[323] However, these early obstacles ended soon after, since it was due more to units of the Russian army being inexperienced when dealing with the media, rather than a Russian government policy to shoot at the media or to steal the media's working materials.

The government did however assign an agency to deal with the media. The Russian Government Press Centre based in Moscow was in charge of distributing the Russian government's political 'spin' on the escalating war. In turn, some reporters began to question the basis of the Press Centre's proclamations as being incorrect at best, mendacious at worse.

One example of this was as early as 24 December 1994, such public statements on civilian bombing proved to be a fabrication when reporters for *Izvestiia* not only told in their newspaper about how Russian planes regularly bombed the civilian sectors of Grozny, but also produced pictures and eyewitness testimony to prove this allegation.[324] As in this case, reporters sometimes made light of the Press Centre's declarations, to the point where few would listen to that agency any more.

Such a press centre did little to affect reportage. When dissidents like Sergei Kovalev spoke out against the war, and remarked upon the 'lies of information about Chechnia,' newspapers were quick to print their opinions.[325]

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[323] See 'Presse ne daiut rabotat,' *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, No. 242 (918), 20 Dekabr' 1994, p. 2.
[324] Iakov, Valerii, 'Press-centre pravitel'stva Rossii izhet!,' *Izvestiia*, No. 247 (24354), 24 Dekabr' 1994, p. 4.
[325] Treguboa, Elena, 'Sergei Kovelev, 'Dudaev ne zachshaiut bandformirovaniia, a narod,' *Segodnia*, No. 243 (350), 21 Dekabr' 1994.

For a further example on this basis, in a June 1995 article on the Budyonnovsk crisis, *Kommersant-Daily* reporter Maksim Sokolov talks quite openly about what it was like trying to attend a news conference near the hospital itself, even at one point talking about a popular anecdote told by the fighters involved. The government position in this article is discussed, but had no position of dominance in relation to other views expressed.[326]

As to be discussed in the next section, some journalists even travelled with and conducted interviews with Chechen units in the field. These journalists suffered little from their stances upon their return to Russia.

- The media position

The media had during the first war a substantial amount of freedom to report on the war in Chechnya. Relatively speaking, especially in comparison to the second war, news agencies had also a high degree of independence.

In this question, however, even the definition of independence is a relative term.

First, one must also further articulate here on what exactly it means to be 'independent.' Immediately after the fall of the Soviet Union, many media sources attempted to maintain themselves through 'self-managing editorial collectives.'[327] These operations attempted to maintain true independence through advertising and sales, without asking for sponsorship from anyone, including Vladimir Gusinsky's MOST group and Boris Berezovsky's hefty financial resources. One by one (especially the newspapers), these operations failed to generate enough

[326] Solkolov, Maksim, 'Press-konferentsiia v palate nomer 6,' *Kommersant-Daily*, No. 111, 17 June 1995, p. 21.
[327] Thomas, T.L., 'Manipulating the Mass Consciousness,' *The Second Chechen War*, (ed.) A L Aldis, Conflict Studies Research Centre, Sandhurst, June 2000, p. 326.

earnings to remain at that level of independence. Many of these media outlets surrendered to Gusinsky and Berezovsky after going completely bankrupt.

Nevertheless, based on the shifting of alliances with the Kremlin and the oligarchs, and based heavily on who actually paid the bills, there continued to be a degree of independence for Russian media even after much of it fell to Gusinsky and Berezovsky.

> 'In comparison to party consolidation or the development of civil society, Russia enjoyed greater success in developing an independent media in the 1990s, a critical component for a liberal democracy.'[328]

Especially under the aegis of Gusinsky, who was less close to the Kremlin than Berezovsky (with the exception of Gusinsky's agreement to side with the Yeltsin team for the 1996 Presidential campaign), some independence in the media continued to exist. Particularly NTV remained almost completely independent in regard to the first Chechen war.

In her new (2006) book entitled, Television, Democracy and Elections in Russia, by Sarah Oates, she has this to say in regard to the first Chechen war and NTV:

> 'NTV built a formidable reputation quickly with its coverage of the first war in Chechnya (1994-6). While state-controlled stations such as ORT were claiming Russian victories, NTV broadcast the darker side of the war as untrained recruits died needlessly. Even more painful for the Russian authorities was the fact that NTV was unwilling to frame the Russian army as noble saviors of the Chechen people, making it clear that there were harrowingly brutal acts against soldiers and civilians on both sides.'[329]

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[328] McFaul, Michael, Russia's Unfinished Revolution, Cornell University Press, Ithaca NY and London, p. 323.
[329] Oates, Sarah, Television, Democracy and Elections in Russia, Routledge, London and New York, 2006, p. 15.

Such remained the case until the beginning of the 1996 Yeltsin presidential campaign with the breach of any pretence of media integrity when their owners and the media itself decided to become political actors to fight against the supposed 'greater' evil of Gennadi Zyuganov.

At the time, Leon Aron went so far as to argue that during the first war, Russian mass media had a direct effect on Yeltsin administration personnel policy:

> 'It is largely because the Russian mass media so vociferously, almost militantly, staked out and defended its autonomy from the government's "line" that, following another spectacular military failure, pressure from the Duma and public opinion forced the President to fire two of the leading proponents of the war: the Minister of Internal Affairs and the head of the Federal Security Service. This dismissal of top national security officials in response to public outrage is an event for which few, if any, precedents can be found in Russian, let alone Soviet, history.'[330]

Aron's statement is a substantial jump that is difficult to prove, but the basis has merit and should be explored further.

As to be discussed, the new levels of structural control during the second war are also notable given the degree to which NTV embarked on aggressive coverage of the first Chechen war. It was an NTV journalist named Yelena Masyuk who interviewed Chechen commander (and architect of the June 1995 Budyonnovsk raid) Shamil Basaev. Such was the backlash to this development that, for this interview of a prominent enemy commander, Masyuk suffered a criminal prosecution in July 1995 (this was dropped in September 1995). The prosecution itself

[330] Aron, Leon, 'Russia Between Revolution and Democracy,' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 11, No. 4, Oct.-Dec. 2005, p. 308. (pp. 305-339)

made little difference in the long run. (This prosecution, as well as her frequent kidnapping experiences have made Masyuk quite well known.)[331]

During the first war, journalists took advantage of their relative freedom, even accepting the courteous help of the Chechen fighters on occasion:

> 'In the first war, for example, Russian journalists would fly into Daghestan's Makhachkala airport and get free taxi rides into Chechnya. The Chechens would pay for the taxi ride once the journalist arrived at his or her destination, give interviews, and remunerate the journalists for articles.'[332]

Television and radio also started to cover the war in detail:

> 'Then too, in its explicitness and anti-government animus, Russian media coverage of the [first] Chechen war, including coverage by state-owned television stations, is without parallel for any country at war, save, perhaps, that of the United States during the Vietnam War. Although some members of the government would have liked to curb the media, not a single newspaper or television channel was censored, much less closed down, and not a single public opponent of the war was harassed, much less arrested or harmed.'[333]

From the beginning of the conflict, Russian reporters and news teams were allowed to travel freely throughout the war zone, more through the lack of policy direction on media given to the

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[331] Hockstader, Lee, 'Journalists Become Chechnya's Latest Victims,' *Washington Post*, 27 May 1997, p. A10, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/exussr/may/27/rusjourn.htm.
[332] Thomas, Timothy L.-Foreign Military Studies Office, 'Information Warfare in the Second (1999-Present) Chechen War: Motivator for Military Reform?,' *Russian Military Reform 1992-2002*, Frank Cass Publishers, Fort Leavenworth KS, 2003, http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/iwchechen.htm.
[333] Aron, Leon, 'Russia Between Revolution and Democracy,' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 11, No. 4, Oct.-Dec. 2005, p. 307-8. (pp. 305-339)

army from Moscow than any other reason. Since the Russian military and government had no clear official line for dealing with these 'intruders,' then the Russian Army simply allowed them to go where they wanted to go and report what they wanted to report.

As Sarah Oates wrote, there was some level of respect for journalists during the first war:

> 'Although some journalists died in the violence of the first Chechen war, there was respect for the international normal safe passage for war correspondents (to a degree) from both the Russian and Chechen forces between 1994 and 1996.'[334]

Overall the media were able to work with little hindrance, given that they had money or vodka or other gifts for bribery purposes.

These reporters were on the front lines of many battles, including the massive Russian New Year's Day 1995 Grozny disaster, where they were in Grozny with the Chechens and reporting on what they had witnessed. When the Russian army had their massive catastrophe in the city, Russian reporters quickly wrote extremely critical accounts of the battle, which then appeared in major Russian newspapers only a few days later. In their articles, they told of the poor training and tactics of the Russian soldiers, and how they were frequently shot in large numbers in the streets at the hands of bearded Chechen fighters.

> '[...] however, the worst losses are still being taken by the Army, That is why planes carrying dead and wounded soldiers of the Army, which 'has finished its work,' leave Severny Airport (in Grozny) for Mozdok every day.'[335]

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[334] Oates, Sarah, Television, Democracy and Elections in Russia, Routledge, p. 15.
[335] Leontyev, Mikhail, 'Chechenskii front,' *Segodnia*, No.20 (378), 2 Feb. 1995, p. 3.

One particular reporter, working again for *Izvestiia*, summed up the situation in Chechnya for the Russian public in the clearest terms possible:

> 'A clear thinking observer, reflecting on the reasons for the federal authorities' defeats in Chechnya, should reject the obviously stupid official arguments justifying the ineffective, to put it mildly, actions of the Russian Army in establishing constitutional order.'[336]

As the war continued, newspapers reported on some of the on-going problems associated with conflicts of this nature. For example, in reflecting on what it calls the 'Chechen Syndrome,' *Segodnia* covered the social issues of rehabilitation of the soldiers and officers serving as internal troops for the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the Chechen war:

> 'Problems of the social and psychiatric rehabilitation of soldiers, officers, and ensigns in the Internal army of the MVD-RF, having service in Chechnia, are impossible to decide on [based on] the present scanty finances, considers deputy commander, Lieutenant General Stanislav Kavun.'[337]

Also in response to developments such as the Kizylar raid of January 1996, some media sources were not hesitant to state the local anti-Moscow position using sensationalistic language. As *Izvestiia* published at the time, Dzhokhar Dudaev had, 'through his fight-to-the-death kinsman,' started 'stirring hostility towards Moscow in the (Dagestan) republic.'[338]

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[336] 'Здравомыслящий наблюдатель, размышляя о причинах поражений федеральных властей в Чечне, должен отказаться от заведомо глупых официальных доводов, оправдывающих, мягко говоря, неэффективные действия российской армии по наведению конституционного порядка.' Belikh, Vadim, Nikolai Borbiiga, Arkadii Zheludkov, 'Voenniie I Boeviki,' *Izvestiia*, 6 Jan. 1995, EastView, http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=3180537.

[337] Kostrov, Leonid, 'Novyi vrag VV - <<Chechenskii sindrom>>,' *Segodnia*, No. 81 (439), 4 May 1995, p. 6.

[338] Gritchin, Nikolai, 'V Dagestan vse gromche zvuchat antirossiiskie lozungi,' *Izvestiia*, Issue 009, 17 Jan. 1996, EastView, http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=3189642.

Military tactics were commonly reported in media as the war continued. As evident from an article from May 1995, *Segodnia* openly details how Russia installs a fresh troop division into Chechnya on the second page of the newspaper.[339]

Segodnia often also published quotes of the inhabitants of Grozny. According to that newspaper, one such inhabitant said:

> 'I am no Dudaevka [Dudaev supporter], but Russian soldiers built much against themselves. In the town, there are two problems.
>
> Until now, Russian OMON took young Chechens in broad daylight. People were lost without trace, and [it was] especially strange, when it becomes dark. Second problem is men in the hospital are not allowed to receive treatment for wounds.'[340]

In the Putin era, such interviews from inhabitants of Grozny will be found to be fewer than in this era. In fact, in regard to all media coverage soon after the beginning of the second war:

> 'The provision of news in Russia began to change in 2000 as persecution of the independent news company and of journalists on independent newspapers began; this was accompanied by the creation of new state-owned television companies, newspapers, agencies and websites. Government bureaucracies began routinely to bandy about a new concept, 'unified news provision', which, on closer inspection, proves to be none other than the familiar Soviet concept of propaganda.'[341]

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[339] Golotiuk, Yuri, 'Rossii perebrasyvaet v Chechniu svezhie podrazdeleniia,' *Segodnia*, No. 82 (440), 5 May 1995, p. 2.
[340] Suponina, Elena, 'Voina prodolzhaetsa chechentsy nastroeny reshitel'no,' *Segodnia*, No. 85 (443), 11 May 1995.
[341] Panfilov, Oleg, 'Rebirth of Russian Nationalism,' *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 35, No. 1, Jan. 2006, p. 145. (pp. 142-8).

During the first war in Chechnya, however, there was not yet this level of state influence; media chose their alliance with the state. In more ideological areas, media outlets sometimes gave in to governmental control almost easily.

Television sources were first in this respect. For example, NTV's president, Igor Malashenko became practically a team player of Yeltsin in March 1996 during the Yeltsin presidential re-election campaign for the distinctly non-independent reason of wanting to influence the election against Gennadi Zyuganov. This was of course made in the belief that if Yeltsin lost, then Zyuganov would turn the clock back and take away all independence. Addressing the topic directly, Yeltsin himself uses this justification in so many words in his book of memoirs, Midnight Diaries:

> 'In principle this was a normal electoral process; the campaign met with all influential groups in society. We would say to them: 'Do you want to survive? If so, help us. Do you want to continue your banking business? Help us. Do you want to have freedom of speech and private TV channels? Help us. Do you want freedom to create, freedom from censorship, freedom from Communist ideology in culture? Help us.' And so on.'[342]

In the face of the threat of Zyuganov, many of the media's financial backers closed ranks and formulated a plan to keep Yeltsin as President.

Yeltsin needed the Russian oligarchs to win re-election in 1996 to counter his 'almost-zero'[343] poll ratings. Referring again to the 'Davos Pact' oligarchy group[344], of which both Boris Berezovsky and Vladimir Gusinsky were members, the media resources of these elite were pressed into service. An alliance of Gusinky's NTV and Berezovsky's Channel One (ORT or

[342] Yeltsin, Boris, Midnight Diaries, Phoenix, London, 2000, p. 28.
[343] Hoffman, David E., The Oligarchs, BBS PublicAffairs, New York, 2002. p. 329.
[344] Referred to in Chapter 2.

Obshchestvennoye Rossiiskoye Televideniye) dominated the media in favour of Yeltsin.[345] On television, Yeltsin connected Zyuganov with old Stalinist imagery, while Yeltsin appeared several times as being the reformist who would lead the country with vigour.

Yeltsin in turn could not refuse any aid and the opportunity to use his connections and the perquisites of his office to help his campaign. After the war, many of these oligarchs received their rewards; Boris Berezovsky received the post of deputy secretary for the Security Council. This post also was in charge of the economic rebuilding of Chechnya, a position from which money was forthcoming.[346] In the end, Yeltsin's campaign would cost 700 million to a billion American dollars.[347]

Whether Yeltsin was right or wrong is arguable in regard to Zyuganov's candidacy, but among many journalists, what Yeltsin was asking was considered logical.

Showing their agreement with this opposition to Zyuganov, many journalists (NTV and otherwise) became essentially political actors with little concern for weighted reporting:

> '[...]Gusinsky's NTV, born in the crucible of the Chechen war the previous year, earned a reputation for standing up to the Kremlin. Now, in a different situation, NTV shifted and went over to Yeltsin's side.'[348]

Obviously, many journalists thought that if they sacrificed their integrity one time, then they would be able to 'resume' their independence. In such a difficult financial and political environment as today's Russia, however, this supposed 'return' to complete independence

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[345] McFaul, Michael, Russia's Unfinished Revolution, Cornell University Press, Ithaca NY and London, p. 293.
[346] Shevtsova, Lilia, Yeltsin's Russia, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC, pp. 202 – 203.
[347] *Ibid*, p. 191.
[348] Hoffman, David E., The Oligarchs, BBS PublicAffairs, New York, 2002, pp. 346.

proved to be elusive. In consideration of the fact that this became representative of the media's effect on public opinion and the war effort, it was difficult to overlook how media independence could be limited in support of not only a political re-election campaign but also the Chechen conflict. Therefore, with media outlets continuing to depend more on pro-Kremlin financial support than ever before, the Yeltsin victory could have been considered little better than a Zyuganov victory.

- Conclusions

Looking at trends in public opinion as found in chapter one, this section finds that the lack of a strong policy towards the press combined with a deficiency in support among the Russian public for a war in Chechnya were the two great contributing factors to press freedom during the war. Lack of sympathy for the reasoning and manner that Yeltsin used to invade Chechnya filtered into the media and into the oligarch elite. Only when the oligarchs themselves felt threatened by the possibility of a Zyuganov presidency did they do anything to rehabilitate Yeltsin's public image.

However, the media did have a unique position during the first war in Chechnya. After the limitations on freedom of Soviet communism, the first Chechen war was the first major chance for the media to demonstrate its independence through the role of being a reliable observer in relation to the government. Much coverage of the first Chechen war was an honour to this responsibility. The Russian public received a thorough view of many aspects, albeit often with some sensationalistic elements, of this conflict in Chechnya.

The media however ultimately failed in this role as a fourth column. By following the desires of their owners/oligarchs and openly supporting a Yeltsin victory in his re-election campaign, many

elements of the media, while not necessarily endangering themselves personally or professionally in the short term, certainly created a precedent for those who would seek to limit their independence in the future.

Media Manipulation in the Second War

This chapter finds that policies of manipulation for the second Chechen war were effective, but also a more congenial domestic and international environment was instrumental in assisting this manipulation. The government position must be explored in greater detail in this case as it expanded from the media policy existing during the first war.

Freedom of the press became an issue of importance as the relative anarchy of the Yeltsin years gave way to the idea of the re-institution of the state as professed by the Putin administration. Putin's dual policies on internal consolidation had much effect in this area. As outlined by Robert Sharlet in the context of what he calls 'metalegal':

> 'Putin has relentlessly and consistently pursued two broadly linked themes: strengthening the state, and obeying the "dictatorship of law," both of which express metalegal policies that affected the legal system of the Russian Federation. The two policies represent Putin's response to the dysfunctional state and legal process left by the Yeltsin administration.'[349]

While media freedom was still a popular concept in theory, research finds that Russian public opinion has been somewhat loath to defend it.

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[349] Sharlet, Robert, 'Putin and the Politics of Law in Russia,' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 17, No. 3, July-September 2001, p. 201. (pp. 195-234)

Media independence continued to be a stated desire of the Russian public. July 2000 polling by ROMIR seemed to suggest that private media were strongly supported by the Russian populace. While 59% of respondents said that private media was positive and necessary for Russia, a significant percentage of (at least by Western terms) 29% said non-state media were 'harmful.'[350] Slightly over a quarter said they felt, to an extent, threatened by non-state media.

Partially, this was because non-state media was seen as a tool of the oligarchs.

> 'State-owned news agencies have traditionally been seen as one of the bulwarks protecting "national interests" against the incursion of foreign news agencies.'[351]

Nevertheless, this shows that a clear majority thought that private 'media' (and not specifically television) was valuable to Russia.

Addition polling data from ROMIR surveys conducted between 30 September and 1 October 2000 reflect only a slight tendency in Russian society (represented by a negligible 3% advantage) towards those who 'often' watch state television:[352]

(Graph 1):

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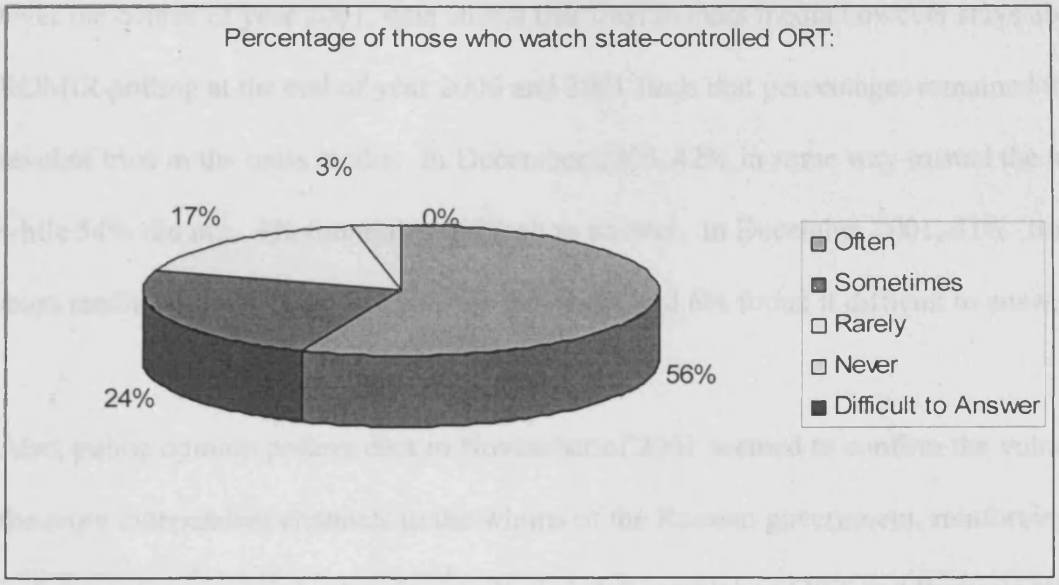
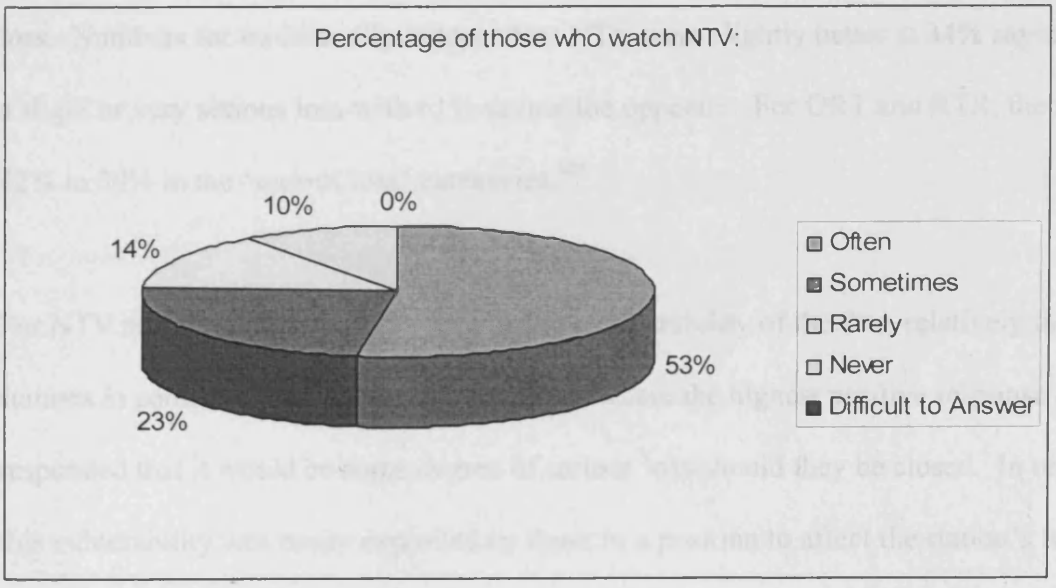
[350] ROMIR, 'Dolzhny li sushchestvovat' v Rossii negosudarstvennye sredstav massovoi informatsii' This polling was conducted in July 2000 of a nationally representative sample of 2000 Russians in 40 federal entities. Website: http://web.archive.org/web/20000829185416/www.romir.ru/market/smi/07_2000/media.htm

[351] Rantanen, Terhi, The Global and the National, p. 79.

[352] ROMIR, 'Rossiiane i televidenie,' Survey of 1857 inhabitants of 10 Russian towns over 18. 30 September – 1 October 2000, http://web.archive.org/web/20010124073100/www.romir.ru/socpolit/socio/10_2000/television.htm.



(Graph 2):



As can be seen from the above graphs, a lower percentage 'often' watches NTV than ORT and a higher percentage 'never' watches NTV. In the same survey, 59% 'entirely agree' with the idea that the first channel 'must' be state controlled. 14% 'somewhat agreed' with this idea, 11% somewhat did not agree, and 8% entirely disagreed.

Over the course of year 2001, data shows that trust in mass media however stays about the same. ROMIR polling at the end of year 2000 and 2001 finds that percentages remained the same in level of trust in the mass media. In December 2000, 42% in some way trusted the mass media while 54% did not. 4% found this difficult to answer. In December 2001, 41% 'trusted' the mass media while 52% refused to trust the media and 6% found it difficult to answer.[353]

Also, public opinion polling data in November of 2001 seemed to confirm the vulnerability of the more independent channels to the whims of the Russian government, reinforcing the balance in favour of government-owned or controlled stations such as ORT and Russia's other official television station, RTR. Only 27% said that the loss of the independent channel TV-6 would be a slight or very serious loss, versus 66% who said that it would *not* be a slight or very serious loss. Numbers for traditionally independent NTV were slightly better at 34% saying it would be a slight or very serious loss with 61% saying the opposite. For ORT and RTR, the results were 42% to 50% in the 'serious loss' categories.[354]

For NTV and TV-6, these results revealed the vulnerability of the then-relatively independent stations in contrast to the government stations, where the highest positive response of the survey responded that it would be some degree of serious loss should they be closed. In regard to TV-6, this vulnerability was easily exploited by those in a position to affect the station's future, namely (but indirectly of course) Putin's administration. This polling data shows that, for much of the Russian public, the most traditional governmental stations seemed to be the highest priority.

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[353] ROMIR, 'Sotsial'no-politicheskaia zhizen' Rossii v zerkale obshchestvennogo mneniia,' Dekabr' 2000 and 2001, Surveys of 2000 adult Russian respondents nation-wide, http://www.romir.ru/socpolit/socio/2002/02_2002/russia-life-january.htm.

[354] Question: 'What level of loss could be attributed to the closing of ORT, RTR, NTV, or TV-6?' Possible answers: 1) Very serious loss, 2) Slightly serious loss, 3) Not slightly serious loss, 4) not very serious loss, 5) Difficult to answer, 1600 respondents, Stated margin of error: 3.8%, VTsIOM, Press Release, 21 Nov. 2001, web site: http://www.wciom.ru

All of these results show that a fairly large number of Russians do not consider the loss of any television channels to be the most serious disaster, and this is not surprising in view of the amount of cynicism concerning television broadcasts in general. At the same time, while showing support for independent channels in principle, the non-governmental channels have the least amount of sympathy in regard to their continuation.

The Year 2000 would represent, as covered before, the end of NTV, but also the beginning of a semi-popular new network that covered more or less the entire Russian nation. This was set up in the form of TV-6, supported by Boris Berezovsky, well-known oligarch who had a hand in destroying Gusinsky's NTV, and eventually Gusinsky himself, thereby forcing Gusinsky into exile in Spain after his arrest. At that point, Gusinsky found it difficult even to flee the country.[355] Such was the culmination of the Kremlin's battle against Gusinsky and his Media-MOST empire. On tax-related charges, he had been arrested in late June 2000. Ironically, much of Gusinsky's fate became Berezovsky's own, as the Russian government used much the same financial and legalistic framework to destroy TV-6, where many of NTV's journalists had gone after NTV was driven into state hands. Consequently, Berezovsky himself was also later forced into exile.

Other forms of media have not been able to adequately assume a role of providing alternative coverage to television:

> 'News about events of any description in Russia is now strictly controlled by the government: all the national television companies and radio stations are state-owned. Only a small proportion of news sources, newspapers and the Internet are in a position to

[355] 'Gusinskogo ne vypustili za granitsu,' *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, Issue 115, 24 Jun. 2000, EastView, http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=271965.

deliver alternative news, and their influence on public opinion does not compare with that of radio or television.'[356]

While that was written in 2006, as to be discussed, the dominance of the Russian media began with the election of Putin, and the events stated above.

Furthermore, those newspapers that did take money from the state were almost uniformly adherent at that time to the central government, a specific political party (usually the Communist party, who rarely ever wanted to get on the bad side of Putin), or the local governor/government who did practically in unison want to stay on the good side of Putin.

'In most regions, the press plays the role of official mouthpiece for the local political leadership.'[357]

One of the first documents that Putin signed as acting President eased procedures for distributing $150 million roubles to fund district newspapers.[358] As even the newspaper article publishing this news piece acknowledges, no money would be given to a newspaper critical of the government.

Radio, on the other hand, did have objective coverage of the war on frequent occasion, and of course radio was a potential source of information for the Russian people. However, for obvious reasons, the power of radio versus television fell in those years. 'National television reaches 98

[356] Panfilov, Oleg, 'Rebirth of Russian Nationalism,' *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 35, No. 1, Jan. 2006, p. 145. (pp. 142-8)
[357] Slider, Darrell, 'Politics in the Regions,' Developments in Russian Politics, Edition 5, (eds.) Stephen White, Alex Pravda, and Zvi Gitelman, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2001, p. 165.
[358] '150 Millionov – malim gazetam,' *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 13 Jan. 2000, EastView, http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=1807823.

percent of the population; it is the only medium that directly reaches virtually the entire population.'[359]

Radio also had further problems with remaining independent.

> 'The situation with radio is much the same. The only independent news radio station is Moscow Echo, which is able to rebroadcast its programmes in 41 Russian cities. This gives it a potential audience of 22,400,000, but obviously not all of them listen to the station's programmes. Probably, as in Moscow, only 8 per cent to 9 percent tune in. The other independent radio stations (of which there are about 1,000) broadcast music and devote 3-6 minutes in the hour to news. Foreign radio stations broadcasting in Russian – Radio Liberty, the BBC, Deutsche Welle – continue to have a modest following.'[360]

The impact of radio transmission coverage is much less than the impact of pictures (or preferably television coverage) on the consciousness of those who listen. It is of course true that the shock of television pictures is known to be more effective than radio in causing debate, and perhaps outrage, in public opinion.

- The government position

Some background must now be explored in examining the government's position on media for the second war.

One event on the world stage reinforced the view of the Russian government that perhaps more control of the mass media, and thereby attempt at control of public opinion, should be in order if

[359] Rantanen, Terhi, The Global and the National, p. 35.
[360] Panfilov, Oleg, 'Rebirth of Russian Nationalism,' *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 35, No. 1, Jan. 2006, p. 146. (pp. 142-8)

hostilities broke out again in Chechnya. This world situation was the 1999 NATO war in Kosovo. NATO's, and many times the NATO governments' tight control over the mass media and their scripted news conferences, complete with video, graphs, and pictures, led many in the Russian government to believe that such manipulation of public opinion would help Russia also in the case of Chechnya. In effect:

> 'the Russians studied the information campaign that NATO ran against the Serbs in the campaign against Kosovo.'[361]

Openness in criticism of government policies and on the military tactical outlook of the Chechen front was seen as detrimental to the first post-Soviet Chechen war effort. The later Putin administration, in planning, managing and overseeing the prosecution of a second war beginning in 1999, saw media freedom as a mistake of the first war, and has seemingly not hesitated to use what financial and political levers it possessed to counter this supposed threat. This included, for possibly the first time, examining the handling of the media by Western powers in the prosecution of their own conflict efforts, such as the stated initiatives of public relations by the Western powers in Kosovo in 1999. The patriotism of journalists, of news agencies and of media company owners was questioned, and government policy began to focus on the relative subjugation of this sphere of influence on Russian society.

Some examples had been evident to Russia even before the first Chechen war, although seemingly only the loss of the first conflict could force the government to acknowledge these lessens. This shows just how much Russia started learning how to have a media policy as it went along. In the case of the second Chechen war, some media-related lessons of the American-led Gulf War of 1991 were finally 'learned' in Russia, as explained by Timothy Thomas:

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[361] Thomas, Timothy L., 'Russian and Chechen 'Information War' Tactics,' *The Second Chechen War*, Occasional Paper No. 40, (ed.) Anne Aldis, Conflict Studies Research Centre, Sandhurst, Sept. 2000, p. 123.

'During the past ten years, the Russian military has attentively studied the subject of information war (IW). The main catalyst for this interest was the successful use of IW by coalition forces during Operation Desert Storm. Russian military theorists watched coalition planes bomb Iraqi targets in real time with precision and understood that warfare had entered a new phase, one dominated by information-based equipment and resources. Two further motivators were the poor use of IW by the Russian armed forces during the first Russian-Chechen war (1994-1996), which contributed to the loss of Russian morale, and the successful use of IW by NATO during the conflict over Kosovo.'[362]

Thomas further presses this point:

'There were several important military lessons that the Russian government and military learned from their first experience in Chechnya from 1994-1996. Perhaps none was more important to long term Russian success than the battle for public opinion.'[363]

From these Western examples, and from their experience in the first Chechen war, the Russian government effectively did not put blame on itself or on the Russian military for their loss in Chechnya. The government put the blame on the media, and the correction of this mistake began in the transition period between the two wars. The state's re-implementation of control over the media in 1999 and 2000, under the direction of the Russian Ministry of Communications and Media and under presidential aide Sergei Yastrzhembskii, was a notable characteristic of this transition between the Chechen wars:

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[362] Thomas, Timothy L.-Foreign Military Studies Office, 'Information Warfare in the Second (1999-Present) Chechen War: Motivator for Military Reform?,' *Russian Military Reform 1992-2002*, Frank Cass Publishers, Fort Leavenworth KS, 2003, http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/iwchechen.htm.
[363] *Ibid.*

'The job of the political technologist is completely different from that of the spin doctor, although the former USSR has press secretaries who perform a similar role, such as Sergei Yastrzhembskii, who became notorious for the euphemism he used when journalists asked after Yeltsin's health: 'The President is working on documents.' Yastrzhembskii's skills earned him an expanded role as propaganda chief under Putin, when he again attracted notice for his stonewalling over Chechnya. The art of the spin doctor is particular. If the term is taken literally, he or she is not responsible for originating a given story, but intercepts and 'spins' it on its way into the public domain. By definition, although many spin doctors clearly plant stories of their own, their work is narrowly situated at the point where politics and media intersect. The political technologists, on the other hand, apply whatever 'technology' they can to the construction of politics as a whole. The manipulation of the media is central to their work, but by definition it extends beyond this – to the construction of parties, the destruction of others, the framing of general campaign dynamics and the manipulation of results.'[364]

On the second war, of further importance are the official organs through which President Putin has approached the area of mass media influence and, indirectly, attempted public opinion manipulation. Another chief of this area in the Russian government since even slightly before Putin's time was Mikhail Lesin, later confirmed as Press (also sometimes referred to as Media) Minister. On the stage of Russian politics, Lesin began as the virtual founder of VGTRK (the All-Russia State TV and Radio Company), created by state decree in 1999 as a state holding to control the vast majority of the state infrastructure of mass communications.

[364] Wilson, Andrew, Virtual Politics, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2005, p. 49.

After the formation of this near-empire in itself, Lesin became its chairman and it is largely from this holding that Putin got his start in the area of news service manipulation. In turn, Putin cemented control under Lesin's Press Ministry.[365] The VGTRK, and later its offshoot, the Russian Television and Radio Network (RTRS), controlled much of the infrastructure, albeit in poor condition, of all of the Russian state media, including the nationwide broadcasting RTR, as well as some 68 centres of regional television, and more than 100 centres for TV and radio transmission.[366]

From outside appearances, the role of Lesin when compared to other democracies was one of overall press secretary. A great many democracies, the United States and others, have a similar role in the structure of their administrations, under parliamentary or presidential governments. Usually, the role of this minister or secretary is to be the face of the administration; his or her job is to put the best possible pro-government spin on policies and budgets for raising public opinion and thereby influencing the process of passing the bill or budget through each particular government's parliament or congress or whatever the case may be. In the United States, the press secretary is merely a high-ranking speaker, who has little actual power in policy making.

Lesin was no simple press secretary, however. He was one of Putin's top officials in policy making and dealing with the media. In referring to the NTV takeover:

[365] Borodina, Arina, 'Pervaia polosa. Govorit i pokazivaet Mikhail Lesin,' *Kommersant-daily*, Issue 144, 14 Aug. 2001, EastView, http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=3727918.
[366] Belin, Laura, 'Bias and Self-Censorship in the Media,' Contemporary Russian Politics, (ed.) Archie Brown, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 327. See also, 'The Presidential Administration and the Federal Government,' RFL/RL, Russian Media Empires VI, p. 1. www.rferl.org/nca/special/rumedia6/rumediaVI_1.html.

'[...]moreover, a smoking gun can perhaps be seen in the comments of Mikhail Lesin, the Kremlin's point man on the press and the media, who has said publicly that he feels that the media is more dangerous to the state than vice versa.'[367]

Lesin also had gained the ire of the media in response to his policies; in July 2000, the Russian Union of Journalists named him Press Freedom Enemy No.1 (Putin was third).[368]

Only Lesin's signature kept Vladimir Gusinsky out of prison (in exchange for a deal on NTV) after the raiding of Gusinsky's Media-MOST offices in May 2000.[369] In comparison with the majority of other democracies, this role is unique and not a characteristic of any other government. This position is moving to be more comparable to the role of press ministries in authoritarian governments, where propaganda, not public relations, is the key operation. Parallels could be made between Lesin's media structure and the propaganda department of the CPSU Central Committee in the Soviet era.

This is not to say that Lesin was any kind of media dictator, however; his influence was in directing, but not micromanaging the government line on the Chechen war. Indeed:

'There was no propaganda czar, however; instead, the government gave its propagandists and their private counterparts carte blanche in manipulating the nation's image of itself as a superpower and in drawing the 'correct' picture of the counter-terrorist operation.'[370]

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[367] Oliker, Olga and Tanya Charlick-Paley, Assessing Russia's Decline: Trends and Implications for the United States and the U.S. Air Force, Rand Corporation, 2002, p. 42, http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1442/MR1442.ch4.pdf.
[368] Coalson, Robert, 'Lesin is Press Enemy No.1' *Moscow Times*, 7 Jul. 2000, http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2000/07/07/039.html.
[369] Lipman, Masha and Michael McFaul, 'Putin and the Media,' Putin's Russia, (ed.) Dale Herspring, Roman and Littlefield, Lanham MD, p. 71.
[370] Trenin, Dmitri V. and Alexei V. Malashenko with Anatol Lieven, Russia's Restless Frontier, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC, 2004, p. 146.

Trenin, Malashenko and Lieven detail five 'strategies for information management' under Lesin's Press Ministry in the conduction of policy.[371] In relation to the war, the Russian government no doubt expected them to be followed. These are:

(1) 'Limiting access to first-hand information.'
(2) 'Having the military itself prepare information with subsequent release for general use.'
(3) 'Excluding the showing of any of the horrors of war, including suffering soldiers and command blunders.'
(4) 'Emphasizing the savagery of the Chechens.'
(5) 'Creating a new [more honourable] image for the army.'

In the beginning of the war, these 'guidelines' had not yet become clear. Connecting the Kremlin's tone with the probability of new conflict in Chechnya, the mass media began to address the issue much the same way as they had during the first war.

Given that in these later years, Russian media outlets have become more dependent on governmental or business sources (after finally achieving some independence from the state), these changes have had a number of repercussions on the level of reportage in Chechnya. As mentioned before, a harder line media policy imposed by the Russian government has also cut down on the amount of information distributed outside their purview. Fewer front-line accounts then made it back to the Russian people or the international press than during the first war.

As well they should, television media sources became the majority target of Putin's policy. Although other sources for information will also be referred to on occasion, it must be stated that, on this topic, television was frequently the first harbinger of the war on information.

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[371] *Ibid.* p. 146.

Reasons for this will be discussed next, but principally, polls show that television has first place among information sources.

A poll taken in 2000 revealed that 70% of Russians watch television every day, versus 11% reading the national press, and 8% for the local press. This is as opposed to 6% who said they never watched television, 30% who never read the national press, and 46% who never read the local press.[372] For the most part, and not only in Russia, it is clear that television is easily the most pervasive and strident of mass media sources.

A more aggressive policy against television in the interests of Putin's rise to power began in many ways with the 1999 parliamentary elections. The formation of Unity in 1999 as a party to occupy the middle ground of Russian politics, supported by Putin, was instrumental in this question. The fight between Unity and the Fatherland-All-Russia (OVR) alliance was 'extremely negative'[373] in this time period. Putin's opponents Yuri Luzhkov (mayor of Moscow), Yevgeni Primakov (former Prime Minister), and their allies did not give up their earlier dominance so easily. Yet, the perks of incumbency were overwhelming, and the media, and pro-Yeltsin oligarch Boris Berezovsky, were on Unity's side.

> 'With slavish coverage of ORT television, Berezovsky helped Putin get elected president for a four-year term on 27 March 2000.'[374]

Protecting the 'existing Kremlin team'[375] from these outsiders was the biggest priority. OVR was overwhelmed by these forces, and failed to break through.

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[372] Oates, Sarah, 'Politics and the Media,' Developments, p. 261. Sourced from: *Monitoring obchshestvennogo mneniia: ekonomicheskie I sotrial'nye peremeny*, no. 4, 2000, p. 18.
[373] Wyman, Matthew, 'Elections and Voters,' Developments in Russian Politics, Edition 5, (eds.) Stephen White, Alex Pravda, and Zvi Gitelman, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2001, p. 67.
[374] Hoffman, David E., The Oligarchs, Public Affairs, New York, 2002, p. 485.

As covered in previous chapters, Russian public opinion, owing to the low amount of party support, loyalty, and affiliation inherent to the country, was certainly open to the introduction of a new movement representing the centre of Russian politics. Analyst Elizabeth Teague of the Jamestown Foundation saw a conspiracy in all this, that Stepashin was essentially set up to fail, that the media war was a natural progression and that the rise of Putin was carefully designed by the 'Family:'

> 'The Family had already decided that the man to succeed Yeltsin should be Vladimir Putin, former head of the Federal Security Service and a man the Family felt they could trust. The idea that Yeltsin should take premature retirement was mooted as early as June. But, since the Family felt that the time was not yet ripe for Putin to enter the fray, Stepashin was appointed to fill the gap. The Kremlin's timing proved immaculate. A year ago, success looked almost unobtainable. On May 7, Putin--the Kremlin's favorite--was inaugurated as president.'[376]

It is difficult and yet amazing to imagine such a carefully executed design coming to fruition in Russia of 1999, but it is nevertheless worth mentioning this theory here.

Predicting the actual election, in a poll of 1,278 people conducted during the first ten days of December by the reliable Institute for Comparative Social Research and reported on in *Moscow Times*, Unity was holding a tie with the Communists at 19%. Fatherland-Russia held only 9.2% percent of the poll.[377] This was despite the fact that, in the realm of public opinion, Unity was

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[375] Wyman, Matthew, 'Elections and Voters,' Developments in Russian Politics, Edition 5, (eds.) Stephen White, Alex Pravda, and Zvi Gitelman, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2001, p. 66.
[376] Teague, Elizabeth, 'The Seven Labors of Gleb Pavlovsky,' *Prism*, Vol. 6, Issue 5, 30 May 2000, http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=7&issue_id=433&article_id=3736.
[377] http://www.bu.edu/iscip/digest/vol4/ed0420.html. As of 1 July 2004.

only a few months old in contrast to the relative 'tradition' of the Communist party and the far younger (but still old compared to Unity) Fatherland All-Russia bloc.

This support for such a young party is due to chiefly three factors: the weakness of social support and loyalty mentioned by Russian public opinion for any given party, the onset of the Russian pro-Kremlin mass media against Fatherland-All Russia and the support for Unity by the image building new Prime Minister. Also, that same poll showed more people trusted the Kremlin-sponsored[378] ORT (45%) than the still-independent NTV (28%). (Support for war, it must be added, was put at 64%, with that amount saying that they fully or rather supported the war.) ROMIR had similar polling results on assessing parties, but showing Unity even in the lead against the Communists (21.9% to 17.7%).[379] Reasons for this support can be seen in the tradition of Russian public opinion at the time. It had been a long time since Russian public opinion had had a leader and a party overtly supported by that same leader that appeared to be strong and gave some small degree of hope in the strength of Russia.

An opinion piece in *Izvestiia* by the president of the Policy Foundation, Viacheslav Nikonov, added a perspective on this parliamentary race. Given new laws and restrictions on parties by the state[380], but the lack of attention to similar laws banning state media political advertising, the election became more of a 'battle between state-owned media and individual candidates and parties.'[381]

On the question of Putin's progression, and final election, to the Presidency, further government influence of the media was in many ways apparent:

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[378] Owned by the state plus Berezovsky plus others.
[379] Karush, Sarah, 'MT Poll: Shoigu's Bloc Is Soaring,' *Moscow Times*, Issue 1859, 15 Dec. 1999, EastView, http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=236442.
[380] Thereby disqualifying parties and candidates for the slightest of reasons.
[381] Nikonov, Viacheslav, 'Particularities aside, vote is crucial, *The Russia Journal*, 4-10 December 1999, http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/3662.html##6.

Moving on into the first months after the recommencement of the conflict, political commentators focussed on the new Prime Minister and the election of 2000. At this time, between August and December 1999, Putin's hold on being Prime Minister was far from being assured. His control over the mass media was in hindsight strikingly an infant version of what it would come to be in 2002. The famous host of the program *Itogi* on NTV, Yevgeni Kiselev, even dared to suggest that Putin was a member of Boris Yeltsin's 'family,'[382] meaning that Putin might be more connected to Yeltsin's corruption than was projected by many media sources.

According to Igor Malashenko, NTV dared to defy candidate Putin, even well after his ascent to acting President and after tanks and infantry began their assault on Chechnya.[383]

Militarily, this time the attack in Chechnya was from two sides, with one side led by General Vladimir Shamanov and the other side of the pincer movement led by General Gennadi Troshev. Later Shamanov became 'Governor' Shamanov of Ulianovsk. In the second Chechen war, he was known for his excessive cruelty.[384] This new aggressive strategy painted a strong backdrop for the new Prime Minister that had risen to his position on the issue.

The sudden and unexpected retirement of President Boris Yeltsin on New Year's Eve, thereby surrendering power to his new Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin, acted as cement for the legacy of Yeltsin himself. Because of Yeltsin's open expressions of support for his successor, and also because he was still something of a mystery, Russian public opinion did not waver in support. Further to this:

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[382] Whitmore, Brian. 'Prime Minister's Popularity Rating Skyrockets,' *Moscow Times*, Issue 1848, 30 November 1999, EastView, http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=236189.
[383] Terror 1999 website: http://eng.terror99.ru/issues/.
[384] See Reynolds, Maura, 'Russia's 'Cruel' Soldier Comes Home,' *LA Times*, 20 January 2001, Prague Watchdog: http://www.watchdog.cz/index.php?show=000000-000008-000001-000028&lang=1 as of 30 June 2004.

'Yeltsin's resignation, elevating Putin to the presidency before the election, gave the latter a huge advantage.'

Also, 'Putin's exceptionally high popularity in opinion polls at the time had put off many potential candidates'[385] for the coming Presidential election. It must be said that, for all of Yeltsin's faults, his decisiveness on deciding on a successor and then following through on his decision, are somewhat impressive.

Another facet of the resignation was the fact that Putin could take less of a political gamble in relation to Chechnya if elections were held sooner rather than later. There was less chance of the war flying out of control if this was the case. During this period in time, the war in Chechnya had not yet gained the stability that it would develop in later years.

Despite the fact that a cloud of mystery held firm over Putin's head, many elites were happy to see Yeltsin retire quietly and have a smooth but fast transition to a new administration, as opposed to the chaos that might ensure should there be an election where competitive forces vied for the Presidency. Russia still has yet to have a truly competitive election and then a move to power by the electoral victor. The transition to Putin's Presidency in the New Year 2000 put off this possibility for many years to come. Indeed, as alleged by Daniel Treisman, in this period the 'Family' moving into the Putin era was stronger than ever:

'Two and a half years later [by 2002], however, the "family" remains stronger as ever. The chief of staff Putin inherited from Yeltsin, Alesandr Voloshin, acts as the kingpin for this clique, and the prime minister, Mikhail Kasyanov, is seen as defending the clan's economic interests. It is true that the "family" now faces challenges from a newer, "St.

[385] Previous two quotes from: Wyman, Matthew, 'Elections and Voters,' Developments in Russian Politics, Edition 5, (eds.) Stephen White, Alex Pravda, and Zvi Gitelman, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2001, p. 71.

Petersburg" clan--- an odd combination of FSB officers and liberal economists from the northern city. But the latter group has not wrenched control of the economic bureaucracy from the Muscovites. Putin, rather than reducing the powers of such clans as promised, has maneuvered between them in a manner reminiscent of Yeltsin.'[386]

As no doubt was expected by Yeltsin and Putin, the media took the transition well.

'In 1999-2000, a few attempts by some channels were made to support other candidates, but at the end, they all supported President Putin, at that time, Yeltsin's nominated successor.'[387]

Despite some previously mentioned commentary by NTV in December, Putin was seen being outside the reputed Yeltsin 'family' and his portrayed image of a quiet active 'fighting' Prime Minister reflected this. For instance, his well-publicised New Year's Eve trip to Chechnya to hand out hunting knives to Russian field troops was a stunning counterpoint to Yeltsin's tired presidential mannerisms.[388]

In the realm of public opinion, with a little help and direction from Putin's media policy, it quickly became unfashionable to speak about Yeltsin's possible criminal behaviour. Happy that the transition went well, Yeltsin himself recounts how happy he was when on 7 January following his resignation; he attended the Bolshoi theatre and was given a standing ovation. He was able simply to disappear from the political scene as the proud 'first president of Russia.'[389]

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[386] Treisman, Daniel, 'Russia Renewed?' *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 6, Nov.-Dec. 2002, p. 60. (pp. 58-72)
[387] Rantanen, Terhi, The Global and the National, p. 34.
[388] Truscott, Peter, Putin's Progress, Simon and Schuster, London, 2004, pp. 120-121.
[389] Yeltsin, Boris, Midnight Diaries, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 2000, pp. 370 - 371.

It is also an issue in this chapter as to how Russian public opinion seems to have accepted the positive portrayal of the war shown by the Russian government, and that the government did not respect any bounds as to how far it could go to create this impression. The information war therefore would be won whatever the costs.

In all wars waged by democratic countries, the government seeks to provide a good basis for initiating military action. Also, rules set down by democratic governments support the ideal of operational secrecy and security regarding press coverage. In most democratic countries, the media are never at risk from their own government, but do in fact 'bridle at the bit,' in wanting to get all information and go anywhere in order to attempt to get the full story from troops and commanders in the field. There is a naturally oppositional relationship between the journalist who wants more independence, and the democratic government, which wants a more limited positive picture of events.

However, the Russian government took a more direct and serious approach in regard to the second Chechen war than previously. In the Andrei Babitsky case, the Russian government and armed forces decided to scapegoat a single journalist and make an example out of him to warn away other journalists. It is interesting to look at the events taking place, and the effects on Russian public perception and reception of information.

Another point is that Babitsky was far from being a hardcore rebellious journalist against the Russian Chechen initiative. Most of his articles simply reported the facts of what was happening in the region. For example, in an article for the Institute of War and Peace Reporting in October 1999, Babitsky stated that:

> 'The war is not unpopular among the general public in Russia. Familiar anti-Chechen fear and prejudice, plus the shock of the devastation caused by the city apartment bombs last month, leaves the clear majority of the Russian public ready to support a full-scale military assault.'[390]

No other part of the article seems any more 'rebellious' than this. In fact, these words seem quite judicious and are indeed far from the anti-Russian traitorous angry journalist portrayed by the Putin administration.

Only a cursory glance needs to be taken at this situation. Andrei Babitsky was a journalist for Radio Liberty risking his life in attempting to report on the war during the early stages of the conflict and then bringing the information out of Chechnya. Given tight government restriction, and his venturing into places that the Russian army and government did not want him to be, the job was a highly dangerous one, even more than normal war coverage around the world, in view of the Russian government's new second war restrictions and manipulation of mass media.

Attempting to bring out from Chechnya press coverage materials, Babitsky was picked up by the Russian army in January 2000 and taken to Chernokozovo filtration camp (one of several such 'filtration camps'). There, his materials were taken and he was beaten. According to the Russian government, because Babitsky was a person serving the Chechen rebels (due only to his coverage of the war, the Russian government had no demonstrable proof of this), Babitsky supposedly 'agreed' to be traded to the Chechen rebels in exchange for Russian Prisoners of Wars (POWs). This by itself is a violation of the 1954 Geneva agreements on POWs, but nevertheless, after being 'traded' (no one has stated exactly what happened), Babitsky eventually

[390] Babitsky, Andrei, 'Total War - Or a Battle for Hearts and Minds?' Institute of War and Peace Reporting, 15 October 1999, pp 1-2.

turned up in Makhachkala, Dagestan in March 2000 much the worse for wear.[391] Later, from 2-6 October 2000 in Makhachkala, he was put on trial by Russian authorities and found guilty of using false documentation (but was amnestied because of a Duma resolution on the 55th anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic War.)[392]

To this day, very few independent observers are sure of what exactly happened; only perhaps Putin and the FSB know the full story. In the pessimistic point-of-view, it was not simply enough for the Russian government to put a journalist they did not like in a filtration camp, which can be considered from most reports as to be the next thing closest to a Stalinist or Nazi concentration camp[393], but they also felt that they could trade him to the enemy because they believed, falsely or not, that such a journalist reporting stories that the government and army did not like was working for the enemy. The details and morality of this event could produce a thesis in and of itself, but for our purposes, the only thing important is its relevance in examination of the role of the media and Russian public opinion during the second Chechen war.

Other journalists in Russia, NTV, and governments and various human rights groups around the world reacted with horror at such a developing situation. The response from Putin and his government was one of dismissal. One general even stated that he would trade ten Babitskys for one Russian soldier.[394] They characterized Babitsky as working for the enemy, and on top of that, simply said that Babitsky had even 'asked' to be traded to the Chechen rebels. Putin himself stated that tolerating Babitsky was 'much more dangerous than firing a machine gun.'[395]

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[391] For one of many perspectives, see Pustintsev, Boris, 'Russia's Media: Back to the USSR?' *Citizen's Watch*, Perspective, Vol. 10, No. 4, March-April 2000, http://www.bu.edu/iscip/vol10/Pustintsev.html.
[392] Izmailov, Viacheslav, 'The Babitsky Trial: Rule of Law,' *Novaia gazeta*, specific newspaper date not given, translated in *Perspective*, Vol. 9, No. 2, Nov.–Dec. 2000, http://www.bu.edu/iscip/vol11/Izmailov.html.
[393] Amnesty International, 'Chechnya: Rape and torture of children in Chernokozovo "filtration camp," 23 March 2000, http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGEUR460192000?open&of=ENG-RUS.
[394] Dardekin, Sergei, 'A my za odnogo rossiiskogo otdali by desit' marshalov Sergeevykh,' *Novye Izvestiia*, Issue 20, 5 Feb 2000, EastView, http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=3420322.
[395] Truscott, Peter, Putin's Progress, Simon and Schuster, London, 2004, p. 130.

His view of Babitsky was that he was an enemy combatant, who was spreading disinformation for the enemy.

Some politicians did speak out, although to little effect in the long run. Sergei Yushenkov, Duma deputy for the Union of Right Forces referred to Babitsky in these terms:[396]

> 'It is clear that the authorities are giving an example of what the attitude toward journalists and freedom of the press in general will be if the press coverage doesn't respond with what the government and the acting president want.'

Other politicians, like Gennadi Seleznev, the Speaker of the State Duma expressed a degree of sympathy for Babitsky.[397] As a side note, in April 2003, Yushenkov was found murdered under mysterious circumstances.[398]

The argument of the Putin administration seemed to carry the day. This portrayal of the Babitsky saga seemed to rub off on Russian public opinion too, thereby giving the impression that the Russian government was able to get away with almost anything. Russian public opinion simply let much of the issue pass without raising much of an uproar. Only about 300 people, half journalists, showed up at a rally in his support.[399]

The point that the Russian government would simply hand over a Russian citizen to the enemy for any reason was lost on the vast majority of public opinion. This was perhaps the greatest sign of the Russian government's policy for attempting to manipulate Russian public opinion by

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[396] Lambroschini, Sophie, 'Russia: Politicians, Media Criticize Government Over Babitsky,' RFE/RL, 10 February 2000

[397] Lambroschini, Sophie, 'Russia: Politicians, Media Criticize Government Over Babitsky,' RFE/RL, 10 February 2000.

[398] 'Yushenkov Murder Linked to Chechnya?' *Chechnya Weekly*, Jamestown Foundation, Vol. 4, Issue 8, 24 April 2003, website: http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=13&issue_id=555&article_id=3945.

[399] Yakov, Valery, 'Sevodnia Babitskii, zavtra - ty,' *Novye Izvestiia*, Issue 25, 12 February 2000, EastView, http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=3420577.

use of the mass media, even perhaps on a scale that the early Pre-Putin proponents of the policy never could have imagined.

Babitsky's treatment, and also the treatment of other journalists during the second war, is in marked contrast to how journalists were handled during the first Chechen war. It is true that some journalists during the first war were arrested for doing the most extreme interviews with Chechen leaders, but rarely if ever were their prosecutions seriously followed up. During the first war, journalists generally had not had to fear the Russian government more than the Chechen rebels.

From May 2000 onwards, Russia saw the final moves being made against the then last nationwide television network that was not under nominal government control or influence. NTV had been the source of much criticism of the war and of Putin, and had been the most objective in regard to journalistic cover of the second Chechen war.

> 'The only television network that refused to follow the authorities' new rules was Vladimir Gusinsky's NTV.'[400]

A sequence of events during the period shortly after the election of Putin as President was set in motion that would basically rob NTV of its independent status from governmental ownership or influence. This time period, which continued on into its final fall in 2001, signalled the end of this station that had the longest tradition of free television media in the country.

While the main issue of the attack on NTV was its free media stance, secondarily it was also connected to the attack on the independent variable that was its owner, 'oligarch' Vladimir

[400] Trenin, Dmitri V. and Alexei V. Malashenko with Anatol Lieven, Russia's Restless Frontier, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC, 2004, p. 146.

Gusinsky, and stemmed partially from the low assessment in which oligarchs were already held in Russian public opinion.

Research from a paper from the winter of 1997 already explored the beginning of this issue. As David Mason and Svetlana Sidorenko-Stephenson write in an article from *Slavic Review* in regard to surveys asking about whether it is okay for businessmen to make good profits because everyone eventually benefits:

> 'On this question, as with many others, it seems that the early enthusiasm for capitalism, and especially for profits, had diminished somewhat five years into the transition. It would be too much to say, however, that Russians were *opposed* to business profits; rather their orientation was more ambivalent. One could argue, in fact, that the 1996 responses were more sensible and realistic than the overwhelming support for business profits in 1991—support much higher than that of any of the *capitalist* countries in our sample in that year.'[401]

July 2000 ROMIR polling data indeed continued to reveal that business tycoons were in fact very vulnerable to attack from the Russian government. In regard to the 'crusade' against Vladimir Gusinsky, of which the assault on NTV was a definitive part, the highest percentage, 32%, thought that the 'activities of the prosecutor's office' were 'justified.' 28% thought that it was part of a new distribution of property, which, according to other polling data, was not an unpopular idea when considering Russia's business tycoons. Only 11% replied with the most

[401] Mason, David S. and Svetlana Sidorenko-Stephenson, 'Public Opinion and the 1996 Elections in Russia: Nostalgic and Statist, Yet Pro-Market and Pro-Yeltsin,' *Slavic Review*, Vol. 56, No. 4, Winter 1997, p. 705. (pp. 698-717)

sceptical answer, that such a 'crusade' was the action of a new hard-liner regime.[402] Attitudes like these made Gusinsky highly vulnerable in relation to the Kremlin.

Given NTV's past, if the Russian government was looking to solidify its hold on public media and fulfil Putin's campaign promise of reigning in the oligarchs, then it was a natural first target. The fact that NTV was the most objective in dealing with the new war in Chechnya sealed its fate. NTV had built up debt with Gazprom for operating expenses, including the cost of launching a communications satellite for nation-wide transmission.[403] This of course made NTV increasingly vulnerable. NTV/Media-MOST had not been completely blind to its possible vulnerability. Gazprom (allegedly at the Kremlin's behest) called in the debt and NTV was in effect bankrupted.[404] Evidently, Gusinsky had initially felt that he could weather the 'storm' and still have some leeway in dealing with the Putin administration, when he in fact could not.

One must say that it is common throughout the world for such private companies to take out loans and then have them called back in, for it is the right of the lender to ask for money back, in instalments or in total depending on what is agreed to. However, out of all the companies in Russia that borrowed money, even from Gazprom itself, only NTV became the target of this change in financial loan status. There are two possibilities: (1) it was a coincidence; (2) it was intentional. In the end, it was probably intentional, looking at the circumstances of the loan recall, Gazprom's ownership divide, and the desires of the Russian government at the time. There was little question as to the influence of Putin over Gazprom.

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[402] ROMIR, 'Othnoshenie rossiian k situatsii vokrug Vladimira Gusinskovo I drugikh oligarkhov,' Survey taken nationally of 2000 respondents in 40 federal districts. Web site: http://web.archive.org/web/20000829181615/www.romir.ru/socpolit/vvps/07_2000/gusinsky.htm

[403] Fossato, Floriana and Anna Kachkaeva, 'Russia: The Origins of a Media Empire,' RFE/RL, Moscow, 13 March 1998, http://www.rferl.org/features/1998/03/F.RU.980313140126.asp.

[404] Volkov, Vladimir and Stanislav Smolin, 'The Kremlin assumes control over the NTV oppositional television station,' World Socialist Website, 21 April 2001, http://www.wsws.org/articles/2001/apr2001/russ-a21.shtml. See also: Hoffman, David E., The Oligarchs, Public Affairs, New York, 2002, pp. 482-483.

'President Putin has declared his intention to increase governmental influence over the company and has already taken steps to block the transfer of Gazprom's assets to other subsidiaries or affiliated entities or the dilution of its holdings without board approval.'[405]

More specifically, Lilia Shevtsova of the Carnegie Foundation makes the case that not only did Gusinsky and his media forces attempt to oppose the new Kremlin hierarchy, but that Gusinsky himself tried to demand concessions from Putin in a direct or personal way.[406] Nevertheless, whatever the motives might have been, Putin could simply say no to Gusinsky, for it was the media empire of Gusinsky and particularly NTV that Putin saw as the more direct potential threat.

Russian public opinion, reflecting their sympathy with the image of Russia and of its media as directed by Putin, was not hostile to these actions against NTV. The end result was that Russia was less free afterwards than it was before. Russian public opinion received a less unbiased view of the Chechen war from other more popular television stations, particularly those, as stated before, which were owned or connected to the government.

With the year 2001 fall of NTV into subservience to the Russian government, there appeared a stampede of Russia's most independent television journalists, among them well-known anchor Yevgeni Kiselev, looking for new work. They found a home in TV-6, which was an independent television station majority owned by Boris Berezovsky, who was managing to broadcast nationwide through another maze of dealings.[407] Although it existed without the name and traditions of NTV (which was not so old itself) TV-6 was then able to offer a counterpoint to state-owned or state- indirectly owned television stations.

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[405] Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, The Investment Environment in the Russian Federation, OECD, 2001, p. 50.
[406] Shevtsova, Lilia, Putin's Russia, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC, p. 94.
[407] Szabo, Gabor, 'Russia's Media Melee Enters New Round,' *The Russia Journal*, 19-25 October 2001, No. 4, http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/5501-4.cfm.

In the first days of 2002, the Russian government made moves to shut down TV-6 through the use of financial laws. In this case, LUKOil owned a minority interest against Boris Berezovsky who had two-thirds ownership. Relative to its closeness to the Kremlin, LUKOil brought TV-6 to the attention of authorities by saying that TV-6 possessed debts which were beyond its size (TV-6 had gone into debt for operational expenses). This was only possible in the strange world of Russian law by applying a law that says that basically, to make a long story short, all assets must balance out debts over the long term.[408] Of course it is an impossible law for most Russian businesses, which would all be instantly in violation if they took out a loan but did not have the corresponding value in hard currency or assets. Nevertheless, a Russian judge ruled for LUKOil. On a stranger note, the law was due to expire on 1 January 2002, but was still applied after this date.

However arcane, the primary purpose for including this account here is to examine how these dealings affect media independence in relation to Russian public opinion and the second Chechen war. When commenting on the subject, usually informally, the Russian government portrayed TV-6 as merely a tool of Boris Berezovsky, who was the richest and best known of all of the oligarchs going back through the entire Yeltsin era. This made Berezovsky another chief target in Putin's push against unfavoured oligarchs.

There existed in this period for the first time the feeling that Putin was truly preparing to knock off oligarchs one by one, particularly if they became involved in Russian politics. All the while, as perhaps *Wall Street Journal Europe* said it best, Putin 'portrayed himself as a disinterested observer of obscure legal battles between private actors before an independent judiciary.'[409] Outside of the time periods covered in this thesis, Putin's indirect approach towards possible

[408] 'Law and Pravda,' *Johnson's Russia List*, 14 January 2002, http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/6023-8.cfm.
[409] *Ibid.*

enemies has carried over past the time covered in this thesis with the arrest of Mikhail Khodorkovsky and the ensuing destruction of his oil company Yukos.

Returning to 2002, TV-6 was showing footage that the Russian government did not approve of. In reference to the destruction of a school and hospital by Russian soldiers, Human Rights Watch notes that Russian TV-6 broadcasted footage of the aftermath of these events.[410] This made it a threat, and in the eyes of the Russian government, an access road to the public that must be shut down.

In 2002, ROMIR asked Moscovites why they thought the closing of TV-6 took place. 26% thought it was simply an economic conflict between the owners. 20% thought it was a struggle between oligarchs. 16% thought it was a struggle of creative control, possibly involving Kiselyov personally. 4% blamed the government's struggle against free speech and 9% found other reasons, while 26% had no answer.[411] From this representative survey, at least in Moscow, public opinion seemed to not consider the government to be a threat to media freedom.

Later in 2002, in regard to press affairs, the Kremlin felt some direct modification to journalistic guidance from the state was necessary after the Nord-Ost theatre siege. This is the case because some television shows, particularly from NTV (who briefly showed relatives of the hostages in the theatre), had annoyed the Kremlin over the course of the crisis. The Press Ministry had sixteen recommendations for journalists covering such a situation, and all sixteen suggestions carried with them the threat of prosecution if they were not obeyed.

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[410] See 'Russia/Chechnya,' Human Rights Watch, Vol. 14, No. 2 (D), p. 39, http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/russchech/chech0202.pdf

[411] ROMIR, 'Sotsial'no-politicheskaia zhen' Rossii v zerkale obshchestvennovo mneniia,' January 2002, Survey of 500 adult Moscovites, http://www.romir.ru/socpolit/socio/2002/02_2002/russia-life-january.htm.

All told, the sixteen 'recommendations' were clearly designed to 'suggest' to journalists that they should report only what the state asked them to report. Filled with vague statements that could be modified to cover any free thought in a journalistic setting this represented nothing but more manipulation of Russia's already manipulated press freedom. Combined with this, offices of the weekly newspaper '*Versia*' were stormed the night before articles questioning the raid were published. Both of these actions by the Russian government represent yet more restriction on press freedom.[412]

Perhaps the most extensive point to make on the Russian government's attempts to control the media can be seen in regard to the thought processes of those who actually try to report on Chechen events, or more broadly, in regard to Russian media as a whole. As well summarized by the Russian editor Masha Lippman and the professor and Russia analyst Michael McFaul:

> '...another consequence of the campaign against Media-MOST, NTV, and TV-6 is self-censorship. Journalists and political commentators realize that there are real risks in going too far in criticizing the government. Some have decided to quit their profession altogether.'[413]

Those who push forward, as did Andrei Babitsky and, in another example, Anna Politkovskaya, have met layers of obstacles to deter them. In Babitsky's case, this took the form of his unpredictable detainment and the trading of his person between two sides in a war zone and, in Politkovskaya's case, frequent arrest and death threats leading to the necessity of her having to temporarily flee the country. In 2006, this led, as many allege, to Politkovskaya's death.

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[412] Zolotov Jr, Andrei, 'Ministry Draft Guidelines for 'Media,' *Moscow Times*, 05 November 2002, Issue 2559, http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=4474594.

[413] Lippman, Masha and Michael McFaul, 'Putin and the Media,' Putin's Russia, (ed.) Dale R. Herspring, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., Oxford UK, 2003, p. 77.

Yet, as especially in Politkovskaya's case, some continued at the time to question authority and delve into Chechen war affairs. An interview with her in 2003 has been published in which she asks whether Russian special services had a role in organizing the 2002 Dubrovka theatre siege.[414] Always the daring journalist, even with Putin's media intimidation, Politkovskaya was frequently the outspoken voice. As far-fetched and interesting as the prospect of Russian secret service support of the incident sounds, one must be impressed by the fact that there is still someone around to ask the toughest questions. For a detailed listing of the abuse of journalistic freedom by the Russian government, look no further than the group 'Reporters sans Frontieres' which, it must be said, has done an excellent job of trying to document the curbing of press freedom, both in Russia and worldwide.[415]

This is all despite the fact that many polls show that Russian public opinion clearly support 'freedom of the press.' Nevertheless, a clear indifference exists to government manipulation of this 'freedom.'[416] There is one clear way to address this apparent inconsistency, and that is to examine the second Chechen war from the standpoint of saying that the 'ends' justifies the 'means'. Success and the cohesiveness of the country, in effect, over-ride the examination of the actions used to arrive there.

From a Western point-of-view, this indifference by Russian public opinion would be considered to be somewhat immoral, but from the point-of-view of Russian public opinion, Russia's actions should not be addressed from that Western standpoint, but only from the situation and environment inside Russia itself. Also, the Russian government had no interest in provoking attention to its policies in Chechnya and endangering the carefully built public relations portrayal of the conflict that the administration built.

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[414] In English, Interview of Anna Politkovskaia by Human Rights Information, Press Release 413, 7 May 2003: http://eng.terror99.ru/publications/099.htm

[415] Reporters sans Frontieres homepage: http://www.rsf.fr. More specifically in the Russian case: http://www.rsf.fr/article.php3?id_article=4874

[416] Lippman and McFaul. 'Putin and the Media,' Putin's Russia, p. 78.

- The media position

During the intervening years between the two wars in Chechnya, Russian media made little attempt to 'rehabilitate' the idea of the Chechen bandit in the Russian 'mindset.' From the end of hostilities in the first war, few attempts were made by the mass media to accept Chechens, or north Caucasians in general, as being a part of Russian society.

In fact, there were continued attempts by media sources to discredit Chechens:

> 'Particularly since the resumption of regular military operations in 1999, the Chechens have been portrayed in the media and by politicians as 'treacherous' and 'savage' enemies of Russia, who threaten its religious and cultural traditions.'[417]

It must be said that the conditions for a second war were made all the more possible in this pre-Putin era when the major media still had at least some independence without repression by state policy.

In response to Putin's policies, many journalists have sought to still cover the war, but as discussed before, crackdowns on journalistic freedom in the second war have been significant. Also, this has forced the government's viewpoint to permeate through Russian culture. During the period studied, there have been few major interviews with Chechen field commanders during the second war, especially without legal implication for the conducting journalist.

[417] Tolz, Vera, 'Values and the Construction of a National Identity,' Developments in Russian Politics 5, (eds.) Stephen White, Alex Pravda and Zvi Gitelman, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2001, p. 277.

> 'In 1995 the Russian government lost the propaganda war by default. This time it made every effort to control the media and ensure that its view of the war dominated public opinion. Russia won this information war from day one of the fighting and is still winning. The government and military control access to combatants and censor reporting that could undermine support for the war. Reports of Russian military successes have fueled support for military activities among the populace.'[418]

Corresponding to this point:

> 'With few exceptions, Russian journalists have not complained about the media management, and instead have picked up much of the military's jargon, such as references to 'working' in the city instead of bombing or assaulting.'[419]

Again in the area of television, the beginning of the war prompted the three major Russian network channels to divide up coverage of the war as they had during the first war. RTR (Channel Two, fully state-owned station) and Channel One OTR (51 percent state-owned) took a harder line, more governmental view of the situation in Chechnya, using the Russian government's guidelines as such, and NTV had a more free, journalistic point-of-view of the war, willing to look at the war objectively and so on. Of all the television channels, only these three extended to covering all of Russia. As said before, this order of television journalism was created during the first war, but this state of affairs would not however endure the second time around.

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[418] Thomas, Timothy L., 'Grozny 2000: Urban Combat Lessons Learned,' *Military Review*, Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth KS, July-August 2000, http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/fmsopubs/issues/grozny2000/grozny2000.htm.
[419] *Ibid.*

Some discussion should be had on why, during much of the time period after the first Chechen war, NTV was not the most popular television station even though it was independent. In fact, ORT was the most popular for news during much of this time period despite the fact that ORT was much more likely to toe the stated government line. The best explanation for this is that 'viewers' tastes change slowly, and they are inclined to their old viewing habits.'[420] On the subject of news reportage, Sarah Oates attributes this conservative stance to the Soviet experience of many ordinary Russians, in that they are able to 'filter' out the important material and let the rest pass.

> 'Ordinary Russians, in fact, seem relatively comfortable with the idea of the media as a political player, rather than an unbiased watchdog or commentator on political life.'[421]

Obviously, it is different with the younger post-Soviet generation, but with the older crowd, this is a justifiable position with some merit. The older mindset stood to benefit the Russian government in the 1999-present era on Chechnya.

Journalists responded to the threat of repression by seeking other means for reporting information, often by changing from media outlet to outlet. As stated before, Russian television over the course of this war would become almost a bargaining chip of the government. Such journalists who sought to fight to maintain their independence were driven from one place to the next as the Russian government turned its attention, but rarely in a direct way, on each successive independent channel that arose. Hence, between 1999 and 2002, this was the case for NTV and then its successor TV-6. In both instances, it would be proven true that 'the media's

[420] Rantanen, Terri, The Global and the National, p. 101.
[421] Oates, 'Politics and the Media,' Developments, p. 266.

precarious financial position facilitated the re-assertion of state power,'[422] even more so than during the first conflict.

Interviews with Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov and Chechen spokesman Movladi Udugov have met with threats to the journalists involved that would have been unheard of with NTV's coverage of the first war. No longer will they be only legally prosecuted as in the first war with Yelena Masyuk (as mentioned previously), but in the second war, they will also be dealt with as traitors, as was the case with Babitsky and Politkovskaya, who have been shown to have experienced their own unique brutal punishments for their outspokenness during the second conflict.

Of course that in spite of Putin's war on media, coverage was never completely silenced, and many Russians saw pictures and heard reports of the carnage on occasion. It is undeniable that human casualties in this segment of the war were unbelievably atrocious. Houses, farms, and anything dotting the landscape were bombed or put under artillery fire. As covered previously from a strategic/tactical standpoint, civilians experienced the frequently indiscriminate use of heavy weapons.[423] Much as happened during the first war, many Russian soldiers did not care what they were attacking as long as it was not their fellow Russian troops (which was not always a guaranteed fact).

Needless to say, this type of warfare caused a torrent of refugees to attempt to leave Chechnya, usually towards the east and Dagestan, or north towards Stavropol Krai. Unlike during the first war, however, the Russian government made much more of an effort to seal off the region, professing the belief that Chechnya would be safe in a short amount of time and in order to

[422] Belin, Laura, 'The Russian Media in the 1990s,' Russia After Communism, (eds.) Rick Fawn and Stephen White, Frank Cass, London, 2002, p. 154.
[423] For an in-depth study of this tragedy, especially from eyewitness accounting, see Politkovskaya, Anna, A Dirty War, Harvill Press, London, 2001.

prevent media sources from seeing a large amount of the rather gruesome treatment inflicted on these peoples. The borders were frequently sealed, both for entrance and for exit, causing long lines of refugees to form on the border, going in both directions.[424] Nevertheless, there were 'filtration' camps built in surrounding areas, but these became holding areas for those who arrived first, then becoming forbidden areas once the Russian Army proclaimed an area 'free of rebels.' There are countless stories of people trapped at the border and in these refugee camps, many of them horrific and unnerving.[425]

Yet, the Russian media frequently chose not to transmit the full scope of this tragedy back to television sets throughout the country. Journalists like Anna Politkovskaya continued to brave Putin's information war, but had to deal with a Russian public not eager to hear the stories.[426] Counter to this:

> '[...]from August to October 1999, the vast majority of private as well as state-owned media devoted almost exclusively favourable or neutral coverage to the Russian military effort.'[427]

As suicide bombings became prominent in the Chechen war, so did their coverage by Russian media. The week of 26 June 2000 to 2 July 2000 marked a particularly strong upsurge in this type of attack, capped by a single truck bombing over that weekend against a Russian dormitory that killed 37 highly trained Russian police in a large explosion.[428] This was not the first, and it

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[424] Eismont, Maria, 'In the Borderlands of Hell,' *Institute of War and Peace Reporting*, p. 1. See: www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/cau/cau_199910_04_06_eng.txt.
[425] Politkovskaya, Anna, A Dirty War, The Harvill Press, London, 2001.
[426] See also: Politkovskaya, Anna, Vtoraya Chechenskaya, Zaharov, 2002.
[427] Belin, Laura, 'Political Bias and Self-Censorship in the Russian Media,' Contemporary Russian Politics: Reader, (ed.) Archie Brown, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001, p. 336.
[428] reported on by, among others, Strijbosch, Margareet, 'New Deadly Tactics in Chechnya,' *Radio Netherlands*, 4 July 2000.

was not the last, of many such attacks gaining prominence during this war. Russian media sources reacted with horror to this, and further tragedies.[429]

The Russian government responded predictably, proclaiming that terrorism could not force a Russian withdrawal. The mass media saw this event as connected to foreign intervention in the conflict and treated it as such, Russian public opinion agreed with the political direction that Putin supported. VTsIOM data revealed that 54% said they viewed Putin's performance positively, against 15% who said the opposite.[430]

In dealing with these state policies cutting down on their independence, media outlets either adhered to the state line or looked for new financial backing or, in the case of individual journalists, searched for new and more secure outlets for employment. Little else could be done in the atmosphere of a moderately successful war as explained in chapter two.

- Effective policy?

Some debate must be engaged in at this point in order to examine whether this heightened concentration of governmental restraint on the media in Russian society has been successful.

From the point-of view of Russian democracy, formal and informal policies on state control of media have been repressive, however in terms of perhaps 'guiding' Russian public opinion in a sympathetic environment where the public is not completely against the war, these policies have been effective. Part of public relations in regard to a war such as this is to make sure the 'silent majority' of public opinion, which will not speak out against the war, is not unduly impacted by

[429] Stulov, Oleg and Mura Muradov, 'Iz chechenskikh kamikazdze formiruiut batal'oni,' *Kommersant-daily*, Issue 120, 5 July 2000, http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=3700562.
[430] Chernega, Yuri, 'Putin – "Teflonovii President," *Kommersant-daily*, Issue 122, 7 Jul. 2000, EastView, http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=3700778.

the war's effects or media accounts. In this sphere, the Putin administration has done well. As stated in chapter two, even though support in polling data is falling for the second war, most of the Russian public seems to be willing to allow the Putin administration to handle the matter.

Matters in respect to a successful Russian IW policy have not been helped in favour of the Chechen side by the Chechens either, as must be detailed briefly at this stage.

Warlordism in Chechnya by Chechen rebels extended also to attacking foreigners who were aid workers and journalists trying to cover the war for international news services. Earlier in the conflict:

> '[...]victims included six foreign Red Cross workers and four Western telecom engineers (three Britons and one New Zealander), whose decapitated bodies were found beside the road in the breakaway republic.'[431]

International journalists were also periodically captured by Chechen forces and held for ransom, and were sometimes killed. This became such a problem that many international news services ceased trying to cover the war, leaving only militarily permitted (and hence censored) news groups actually there to cover the conflict. There is of course a large amount of disputable evidence in these kidnapping and murder cases, for in many of these circumstances, the truth will never be known, but the facts of the matter was that the Russian portrayal of the situation prevailed, and the view that Chechens were kidnapping and killing foreigners became widespread. Once again, unlike in the first war, the Chechen side of the conflict failed to make a persuasive argument to counter Russian propaganda.

[431] Truscott, Peter, Putin's Progress, Simon and Schuster, London, 2004, p. 98.

It has be mentioned also that, like during the first war, there were (and are) web sites that posted the Chechen point-of-view (Russian and English). Many of the web sites started in the first war have never been completely shut down. However, in the second war, these have seemed to attract less attention and to be merely vehicles for information read by those who study the war and not common sources of rallying support.[432] Nevertheless, they are produced, albeit with less attendant publicity.

Points stated refer back to a number of mistakes. There were ultimately three reasons why the Chechen side failed to disseminate effectively their version of events.

(1) There was a less unified Chechen insurgency, with the influx of political-radical Islam

(2) The dedication of a more 'unified' Russian leadership (at least at the top)

(3) a more stringent Russian media and information control

This is also not to say that the Russian public was less interested in news. Incidents such as the fire in the Ostankino tower have also had an incidental effect on media coverage in this time period. Polls taken by ROMIR (of 500 adult Muscovites) after the August 2000 fire in the Moscow transmission tower demonstrated that the resulting loss of news reporting was a significantly high priority in Russian public opinion. This fire caused television broadcasting from the tower to be shut down, thereby depriving a great many Muscovites of television and people in the outlying regions who had no access to cable pay channels (like TNT, Stolitsa Channel, and NTV Plus). 88% responded that loss of television was a 'loss' or a 'significant loss' in their life. Given a list of things (News, Movies, Analytical programs, Entertainment programs, etc.) that they would most miss from television (of which they could pick three answers), 73% of respondents said they would most miss the news, versus 39% who said they

[432] www.kavkazcenter.com, March 2004.

would miss movies most.[433] The first vote by respondents obviously was for news, while the other two choices were divided heavily between the other answers. This underscores once again the importance of television in the dissemination of news to the capital and biggest population centre of Russia.

Once again it must be said, on the important issue directly on the Chechen war, Putin's grip on the media was not leak-proof. For another example, in a remarkably open article published in *Novye izvestiia* in July 2002, disclosures by the Russian authorities are summarized. Stating that such openness must be accidental:

> '[...]the fact remains that it was the first time the authorities had admitted so graphically that the war in Chechnya is being waged in a completely inept manner and is resulting in disastrous losses.'[434]

This article is reminiscent of articles from the first war, and if it had been printed a month later, it no doubt would have also mentioned this next point.

Many tragedies were in fact successfully 'bypassed' by the Russian government, if not fully covered up. There are myriad examples of these incidents. For example, on 19 August 2002, another event happened that revealed to what lengths the Russian government's policy of control over the media and resulting top down manipulation of Russian public opinion could survive. On that date, a Mi-26 Russian military helicopter was shot down at Khankala, killing 156

[433] ROMIR, 'Muscovites Polled Following Fire at Ostankino Television Tower,' http://web.archive.org/web/20010303230505/www.romir.ru/eng/research/ostankino-fire.htm.
[434] Yakov, Valery, 'Ubiistvennyi rekord,' *Novye Izvestiia*, Issue 126, 24 Jul. 2002, EastView, http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=4234618.

Russian servicemen.[435] This one event killed more Russian soldiers than in some weeks previous combined.

In the military, this event reiterated the fact that, while Russia continued to have a substantial presence in the region, it could afford to take losses, although it would be folly to continue to make mistakes like overfilling helicopters (Mi-26 helicopters have a cargo capacity of 104 people, cargo lift and crew[436]) and then allowing them to be shot down by Chechens. On few occasions, if any, were these facts ever fully communicated to the Russian people, and little outcry was noticed among those who knew, since much of public opinion accepted many things in the Russian armed forces as being irreparably awful while acknowledging that the Russian war in Chechnya, as specified by Putin, must inevitably continue. In most other democratic countries, such incompetence would have been caused a great scandal, but not in Russia.

Here is another contradiction worth noting also. People missed the news most, but people paid only lip service in support of media independence and did not actively defend the independence of the news. This area of study shows a basis for determining support for the policies of the Putin administration in Chechnya. The Russian public has seen in effect what it wanted to see, and little more. There was little demand for detailed examination of the second Chechen war. Those journalists who tried to report on the war were speaking to an unsympathetic audience.

- Conclusions

Overall, it must be concluded that the environment of Russia between 1999 and 2002 was conducive to the limitation of media by the Russian state. Internally, the Russian public had

[435] Paukov, Victor and Aleksandr Raskin, 'Katastrofa, Rossiiskaia voennaia aviatsia ponesla samye krupnye poteri v sboei istorii, *Vremia novostei*, Issue 150, 20 Aug. 2002, EastView, http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=4283069.
[436] Internet FAQ Archives on Mil Heavy-Lift Helicopters, http://www.faqs.org/docs/air/avhvmil.html.

decided that although they suspected chaotic policies on the Chechen war, the public had also understood that the media could not be trusted also.

Russian public support of the war, although continuing to drift downwards, did not change drastically.[437] This is yet another representation of Russian public opinion being rather more than not in support of the Russian leadership's judgment in conducting the conflict, albeit with some hesitation towards support for war in principle.

As shown from previous chapters as well as this one, the Russian public decided that the issue of Chechnya must be resolved with this second war, and although the media did manage to report on some grievous events in respect to the conflict, the public decided that little could be done about it in respect to the Russian leadership.

A Chief Difference between the Two Wars, and Some Comparisons to the West

Primarily, the question of freedom in mass media as the result of a power vacuum is the crucial element of this comparison. For instance, it is obvious that Putin had a media policy. It is not so obvious that Yeltsin had one. Trying to directly compare government policies between the two wars is something akin to comparing apples and oranges; nevertheless some final points should be made. Indeed, some aspects that were the same in both the Yeltsin period and the Putin period are seen differently in each context.

Whereas in the Yeltsin era this anarchical nature of Russia was seen as a source of chaos and freedom in media, 'aiding' Putin in his media policies after his rise to power is the fact that, quoting the head of the Russian Journalists' Union, Igor Yakovenko, in July 2000, 'In Russia we

[437] Relevant VTsIOM polls from informational bulletins show little noticeable change from their usual vacillation.

have 89 different regions and 89 different press freedom climates.'[438] When Putin sought to inhibit press freedom across the country, there was no collective extra-regional opposition. All 89 individual climates adapted to Putin as president in their own ways, and in turn only possessed their individual resources for combating government pressure to adopt the government's position.

During the first Chechen war, the situation was novel in concept on the basis of a democratic Russia. Television frequently had free access to the battlefields in Chechnya and the ability to scrutinize policy positions and mistakes in Moscow and other Russian cities. The Russian government put out its own line of course, but few actually commented or displayed it because it was so obviously wrong in the vast majority of cases. Journalists could bribe their way through Russian and Chechen lines at will, and rarely were they too impeded in their activities. Many Russian commentators, among them researchers like Boris Kagarlitsky at the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Comparative Politics[439], at the beginning of the second war decried the new rise in censorship and predicted its inevitable downfall, thinking that Russian public opinion would turn much as did in the first war. The predicted turn revealed itself to be a false hope, at least in the course of the three years that are covered in this chapter.

Also, as mentioned before, in some ways Western democracies have become the benchmarks for influencing Russian manipulation of the media. Generals in Western armed forces have become, in the decade following the first Gulf War, sometimes TV generals, briefed and trained in giving news conferences and answering journalists' questions in an appropriate setting. Garth Jowett

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[438] Quote from: Owens, Brad, 'The Independent Press in Russia,' Civil Society and the Search for Justice in Russia, (eds.) Christopher Marsh and Nikolas K. Gvosdev, Lexington Books, Lanham MD, 2002, p. 108.
[439] Kagarlitsky, Boris, 'Grozny's 1812 Overture,' *Moscow Times*, Issue 1843, 23 November 1999, EastView, http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=236083 and Kagarlitsky, Boris, 'Ministry of Truth Losing The War Once Again,' *Moscow Times*, Issue 1922, 22 March 2000, EastView, http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=225676.

and Victoria O'Donnell present a comical view of this in their book, Propaganda and Persuasion.[440]

To quote directly from the US Army website, one mission goal is to:

> 'Sustain an environment that provides resources to support the advancement of military art and science by internal and external audiences.'[441]

Trained officers at the US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, take classes on public relations, and, although this is not so practised (or even approached in the same fashion) in the Russian army[442], leading authorities still sought at times to replicate the same ideal in presenting and dealing with the second Chechen war because:

> 'Ideologically, the fact that the Federal Forces were fighting terrorists made the war understandable to most Russians.'[443]

For further details of the propaganda in Western countries surrounding the first Gulf war, again Jowett and O'Donnell make a number of good points. They found that propaganda in that case was essentially aimed at domestic audiences. While the coalition against Iraq during the first Gulf war was multinational, they put emphasis on:

> 'U.S. forces... Other countries, such as Britain, for example, had a quite different set of socio-historical contexts and circumstance shaping its propaganda strategies.'[444]

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[440] Jowett, Garth S. and Victoria O'Donnell, Propaganda and Persuasion, 3rd edition, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks CA, London and New Delhi, 1999, p. 316.
[441] See www-cgsc.army.mil.
[442] See Troshev, Gennadi, Moia Voina, Vagrius, Moskva, 2001.
[443] Thomas, Timothy L., 'Russian and Chechen 'Information War' Tactics,' The Second Chechen War, Occasional Paper No. 40, (ed.) Anne Aldis, Conflict Studies Research Centre, Sandhurst, Sept. 2000, p. 115.

This is important in that propaganda for the second Chechen war has, and rightly so, a Russo-centric attitude that many times only secondarily addresses the international arena (however important that is also).

Officially, the presentation of the Chechen war took several forms beginning in January 2000. One form was a new system of accreditation for supposedly helping more journalists to visit the region, but in fact making independent journalists abide by more rules or risk losing permission. Two official military press centres were also set up specifically for the war in Chechnya. Combined with daily press conferences by the Kremlin's spokesman on Chechnya, Sergei Yastrzhembsky, and organized trips (organized that is by the military) to Chechnya, this structure represented the official media face of the war effort.[445] Those journalists who did not want to play by these structures found the road ahead to be exceedingly difficult.

While it is true that Russian media has made great advances in news casting since the first war in Chechnya, many advanced techniques have been put to propaganda uses during the second war in Chechnya. On the positive side, Robert Coalson of the National Press Institute correctly points out for instance that in Russia:

> 'More and more of the nation's papers are including maps, diagrams and charts in their reports, a phenomenon that most likely will also help gradually make the texts of articles more precise and detailed.'[446]

Coalson also points out that, in a move full of meaning for debate, the newspaper *Moskovskii komsomolets*, using more advanced graphical techniques, analysed and compared Putin's 2000

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[444] Jowett, Garth S. and Victoria O'Donnell, Propaganda and Persuasion, p. 312.
[445] Lambroschini, Sophie, 'Russia: New Information Strategy Echoes the Old,' RFE/RL, 1 Feb. 2001.
[446] Coalson, Robert, 'Media Watch: Rising Use of Infographics,' *Moscow Times*, 28 Jul. 2000.

State of the Union address with Yeltsin's 1995 address when the country was facing similar issues in Chechnya. Putin, in his address, mentioned Chechnya two times, versus Yeltsin mentioning Chechnya 18 times. Likewise, Yeltsin mentioned democracy 11 times, and reforms 13 times, whereas Putin mentioned reforms 2 times, and democracy not at all. *Moskovskii komsomolets* put technology to use with great effect in order to point out the differences between the two speeches, and this was but one small indication of its possible usefulness.

When used to support propaganda, these techniques can be used to underpin and support even the most false of claims. Such tactics, when used correctly to that end, focus and magnify the desired effects of propaganda, and can make falsehood all the more believable.

Not only was Russia ready to copy NATO's scripted use of the mass media to forward policy goals in Chechnya, but also Russia was willing to use the NATO distance-based style of warfare as demonstrated in Kosovo, in order to keep down the number of Russian casualties. This was also meant to lessen public hostility to the renewed conflict and to blunt the criticisms of the Russian Mothers' Groups and other such organizations that eventually rose again in protest, much as they had during the first war.

> 'As the Russian military planners prepared for the next campaign, they realized that, whenever possible, it was to the Russian Army's advantage to keep the Chechens at least 300 meters away from the conscript Russian ground force.'[447]

Some of these tactics were used to a small degree in Afghanistan, but they had not been fully implemented in that war or during the first Chechen war. The ideal of massive artillery firepower with minimal ground contact was influenced not necessarily in Russian army strategy

[447] Grau, Lester W, 'Technology and the Second Chechen Campaign,' The Second Chechen War, Occasional Paper No. 40, (ed.) Anne Aldis, Conflict Studies Research Centre, Sandhurst, September 2000, p. 101.

training school, nor in the hollows of the Kremlin, but in the mountainous terrain outside of Pristina, Kosovo. This of course came at the expense of civilian casualties, when such heavy weapons are used to clear territory in front of the moving army.

'The damage to Grozny was much more severe during the second campaign.'[448]

In consideration of these points, the central comparison between the two wars on the media issue is one of independence, of technology, and the willingness and ability of the government to forward and reinforce its own policies.

Progressive Effects of the Media Restraint Issue on Russian Society

Of course, the media does not have a stranglehold on public opinion in Russia. As stated previously, many ordinary Russians are more sensitive to inaccuracies from all sources. For some, only their own experiences and the experiences of other people they know can be concrete. Tradition holds that Russian society has been lied to for far longer than the existence of democratic thinking and, to a large extent, the Russian people translate this, as well they should, over to media coverage and entertainment.

It is also the case that the Russian people, and particularly the older generations, have become extraordinarily good at picking up lies and noticing small 'signals' when watching television and other media. Even the smallest clues can become apparent to the learned Russian eye. Manipulation of media for much of their lives has made many in Russia adept at picking out such signals.[449] However, it is also true that:

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[448] *Ibid*, p.105.
[449] Mickiewicz, Ellen, Changing Channels, Revised and Expanded Edition, Duke University Press, Durham NC and London, 1999, p. 296 - 301.

'[...]the influence of sponsors on media coverage can be subtle and difficult to detect.'[450]

The reasons for choosing to broadcast or print some stories, and not others, can be linked to economic and/or political reasoning.

Russian democracy has been degraded by the efforts of the Russian government at repression of the media. Freedom of the media is of course a fundamental part of any democracy. In the not-so-distant future, Putin will either attempt to remain in office for a third term, or there will be an election. How this will be handled in the future, presumably without a high-profile war to artificially boost the next President's public support, will be a central question to examine in regard to the media.

Conclusions

The first war in Chechnya brought an outcry when recruits were slaughtered, forcing Russian generals to have to consider the outside view of their actions by Russian public opinion and the politicians who were ever mindful of such outcries. Media assisted this democratic conversion, but the repression of the media in the second war has brought a return to authoritarianism.

In reference to the issue of 'portrayal' of the wars as indicated in the second point of the chapter introduction, both wars were portrayed as 'necessary' by each of successive Russian presidential administrations. However, only this portrayal of the second war was effective, due to the surrounding environment of changing Russian society, 'chance' events and repressive governmental policy as outlined in this chapter.

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[450] Belin, Laura, 'Political Bias and Self-Censorship in the Russian Media,' Contemporary Russian Politics: A Reader, (ed.) Archie Brown, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001, p. 330.

In reference to the first point of the chapter introduction, the Russian government's newly enforced *paralegal control* of Russian media has now supported what seems to be authoritarianism of the elite, with President Putin as its head. While not on the level of Soviet-era official control, continuing events show that in some ways the repression of freedom of the press, as also stated by many international organizations, is no less complete than 15 years ago. This development has been established in large part through the ongoing policy of the Russian government towards the Chechen situation. With few other issues could the Russian government have strong-armed independent media to such a degree. This is not to say that there are absolutely no independent media sources in Russia, for there are in large part, but they do not have national coverage and/or they are not financially free.

The Russian public has been more willing to accept this state of affairs, by virtue of a new perception of an enhanced necessity of the second war in Chechnya. In this context, media repression by the Russian government has been, to what extent possible, 'allowed' by Russian public. When the Russian public was willing to listen during the first war, the media responded in kind. With the Russian public largely unwilling to accept fundamental criticism of the second war, the media has had to fend for itself in a newly hostile environment. Thereby, the media has been more or less unable to report on the war outside of especially tragic incidents.

Therefore, in reference to the third point of the chapter introduction, seemingly the role of the media is to act as a 'foil' to the Russian government, but *only* when the environment is conducive to such a position. In the first Chechen war, the atmosphere was ripe for this; during the second war, it has not been. When the Russian media acts as this 'foil,' in a situation sympathetic to public outrage, the government found it difficult to ignore. However, the government seems to be able to weather many a political storm such as the downing of the Kursk, so it is further questionable as to the long-lasting effect of media-supported outrage.

In the end, as to be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, Russian democracy is still elite-led and the government can and will dominate in almost every conceivable situation. Therefore, in most cases, the rule of law that would underpin Russian democracy does not truly exist as supported by a potent media. Thirdly, and further from this, Russian democracy as defined by freedom of the media is not democracy at all.

Jason Vaughn

Chapter Five

Russian Public Opinion and the Chechen Wars: An Examination of Democracy and Authoritarianism in Russia

Introduction

This chapter is written to discuss the reality of the Russian state in relation to the ideal which Russia often has sought to project, that of being a democratic state. Based on previous findings in this thesis and on wider topical research, this chapter will seek to examine particularly this issue further.

Along these lines, the following points will be analyzed as accurately as possible:

- Previous studies of democratization, electoral systems, Russian constitutionality and civil liberties, and how each of these principles apply to the case of Russia
- What can we learn about Russia's democracy based on research of Russian public opinion on the issue of the Chechen war?

First, a debate on the theory of democratisation must be conducted; continued by a discussion of the consolidation of democracies in other countries and then as applying to Russia. Secondly, a follow-up section must address electoral systems and the electorate, particularly how these concepts are important in the Russian example. Thirdly, as the threats to constitutionality and federalism have purported to be reasons for the Chechen war by two separate Russian presidential administrations, a discussion on these issues is necessary. Fourthly, there will be a

debate on civil society in Russia, the role of corruption therein and the importance of these concepts in the context of this thesis. Finally, a conclusion will bring all these studies together to reflect on Russian democracy and the status and role of Russian public opinion related to the Chechen wars.

Accompanying these arguments will be a short literature review to detail academic writings relevant to the arguments in this chapter, but which had less importance in research chapters two, three and four.

Theory of Democratisation

The two Chechen wars have been a great test for Russia's political system and the expressed adherence to democracy. While both the Yeltsin and Putin administrations have outwardly professed their dedication to the precepts of democracy, actions of both have sometimes suggested otherwise. This thesis seeks to delve into this relationship between this issue and the Chechen wars, its consideration within the public sphere, and the effects of changes in the tone and the course of each war in the context of Russia's political (i.e. 'democratic') regime.

With one eye looking to the West (and some direct and indirect 'help' of questionable value), in theory Russia has sought to become a 'democracy' in the post-Soviet era. Concerning this, David Held wrote that:

> 'Liberal democracy was feted as an agent of progress, and capitalism as the only viable economic system. Some political commentators even proclaimed (to borrow a phrase

most notable from Hegel) the 'end of history' – the triumph of the West over all political and social alternatives.'[451]

In the wake of Communism, 'democracy' as an ideal was desired; Yeltsin sought to make Russia a democracy but instead made a chaos, in no small part due to his Chechen policies, as shown in other chapters of this thesis.

For one point-of-view, perhaps Samuel Huntington is right in his analysis of this so-called 'third-wave' of democratisation encompassing Russia in the post-Soviet era. He alleges in his article 'Democracy for the Long Haul' that there were reverse waves following the first two waves of democratisation, and so it probably will be with this third wave.[452] If this is so, then the Chechen wars in the post-Soviet era have been harbingers of this phenomenon. Through the reinstitution of order represented in part by the brutal nature of Russian operations in the region coinciding with an effort in media restraint at 'home' (as seen from the previous chapter), it would be an active representation of a rollback of any democratic gains achieved by Russia since 1991.

Firstly, however, what is democracy? Countless articles, books, and publications have debated the concepts of democracy. There have been many disagreements among academics as to what is required for a country to be democratic.

Extending from this, how does Russia progress from Soviet authoritarianism, enter into a democratic regime of some stature, and then theoretically mature in terms of democratic foundation? Or, as many have debated, does Russia fall into impasse somewhere along the way, locked somewhere between authoritarianism and democracy? What are the prerequisites for democracy, and what constitutes the consolidation of democracy?

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[451] Held, David, Models of Democracy, 2nd edition, Polity Press, Cambridge and Oxford, 1996, p. 274.
[452] Huntington, Samuel, 'Democracy for the Long Haul,' *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 7, No. 2, April 1996, p.5. (pp. 3-13)

Many previous academic writings refer prominently to Robert A. Dahl's publications, and most specifically to his book: Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition. He expresses eight necessary requirements for citizens before democratic elections can be considered polyarchic (more commonly called liberal democratic):

1) Freedom to form and join organizations
2) Freedom of expression
3) Right to vote
4) Eligibility for public office
5) Right of political leaders to compete for support
6) Alternative sources of information
7) Free and fair elections
8) Institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference.[453]

Based on these eight suppositions however, Dahl further argues that two dimensions can be extrapolated from applying these tests to any regime. These are: the degree to which these eight requirements 'are openly available, publicly employed, and fully guaranteed to at least some members of the political system who wish to contest the conduct of the government.' Dahl calls this the 'contestation' or 'liberalization' dimension of the equation. The second of Dahl's dimensions relates to the proportion of the population who have access to participation in the government. Dahl calls this the 'inclusiveness' factor in accessing democracy.[454]

[453] Dahl, Robert H, Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition, Yale University Press, New Haven CT and London, 1971, p. 3.
[454] *Ibid*, p. 4.

When put on a 2-D graph, with 'contestation' as the vertical and 'inclusiveness' as the horizontal, Dahl defines the countries that rate high in both dimensions, and therefore in the high right-hand corner, to be 'polyarchies.' He finds that as countries rate closest to this ideal area, they achieve a higher level of democracy, culminating in a type of 'perfect' democracy (polyarchy) which he considers to be something usually unreachable. Any movement up and to the right is considered a trend towards consolidation of democracy.

Following Dahl, it seems that authoritarianism would arise when a country lacks some number of his characteristics. Therefore, understanding degrees of democracy for Dahl would consist of a practical checklist and little more. By applying these requirements to Russia, it would seem that as a democracy, this country would be found distinctly lacking, thereby measuring in the bottom left of Dahl's graph. Since all eight concepts are rather fuzzily available to Russian citizens, with the possible exceptions of numbers two and three, Russia would not be even close to his standard of 'polyarchy.' With the aggressive nature of the state's attitude toward targeting some sources of information, politicians, and organizations that do not agree with the government (thereby inhibiting at the very least Dahl's first, fourth, fifth and sixth requirements, ultimately bringing into question the seventh of 'free and fair elections'), these factors must have a role in studying public opinion, its relationship to the state, and the wars in Chechnya.

Dahl has further comments that are relevant to this paper. In his book, Democracy and Its Critics, Dahl discusses:

> '[...]the near universal effort by rulers in the late twentieth century, including rulers in nondemocratic regimes, to exploit the idea of "rule by the people" in order to provide legitimacy to their rule. Never in recorded history have state leaders appealed so widely

to democratic ideas to legitimate their rule, even if only to justify an authoritarian government as necessary to a future transition to true or purified democracy.'[455]

Although published in 1989 before the break-up of the Soviet Union, these words have no less relevance in contemporary Russia today.[456]

Some writers disagree with parts of Dahl's work however. Guillermo O'Donnell takes a critical view of Dahl in his chapter on 'Human Development, Human Rights, and Democracy.' His view is that the 'combined effects of the freedoms listed by Dahl [...] cannot fully guarantee that elections will be fair, much less institutionalised.' He considers them instead to be 'necessary conditions' that, if they are held in a neutral context, then there is a good chance that the election will be fair.[457]

This has increased meaning in the Russian case; democracy in Russia should not be examined so strictly in following a list of dogmatic requirements, perhaps the 'spirit' of the democracy in question should be as important also, making exceptions and inclusions based on the situation. As Juan Linz points out, 'deviation from the democratic ideal does not necessarily constitute its denial.'[458]

James Gibson too dismisses an understanding of Russian democracy according to 'performance evaluations,' arguing that such studies 'tend to draw more pessimistic conclusions about the

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[455] Dahl, Robert A., Democracy and Its Critics, Yale University Press, New Haven CT and London, 1989, p. 313.
[456] On page 221, Dahl also breaks down his eight requirements for democracy into seven requirements. These are 1) Elected officials, 2) free and fair elections 3) inclusive suffrage 4) right to run for office 5) freedom of expression 6) alternative information and 7) associational autonomy. Dahl refers to the eighth requirement on institutions but as a subtext and not as a requirement. The author chooses to leave in the eighth ranking for the purposes of this paper in order to use as a qualifier apart from its exclusion from the updated list.
[457] Quotes from: O'Donnell, Guillermo, 'Human Development, Human Rights, and Democracy, The Quality of Democracy: Theory and Applications, (eds.) Guillermo O' Donnell, Jorge Vargas Culles, Osvaldo M. Iazzetta, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame IN, 2004, pp. 17-18.
[458] Linz, Juan J., 'Introduction,' The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes, (eds.) Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore MD and London, 1978, p. 6.

consolidation of democracy in Russia.' Using survey data, in contrast to other more pessimistic writers, Gibson prefers an optimistic look at the 'psychometrics' of Russian democracy, and in his section on Russian support for democratic institution and processes, he finds that support for democracy is increasing up to the time of his writing in 2001.[459]

Furthermore, in the Russian case, Linz predicts some of Russia's own future through his study of other nations:

> 'Undoubtedly, the experience of nondemocratic rule and the fear of it lead a large proportion of the voters to continue to give their support to the "Center" as a safe position, the one that best assures the survival of existing democracy, despite their disillusionment with its performance.'[460]

As published in 1978, few better could characterise how Yeltsin remained in office in 1996, and then the phenomenon reoccurred with Putin in 2000.

As expressed further by Guillermo O'Donnell in his chapter on 'Illusions About Consolidation,' the rule of law is a consistently mentioned addition that is necessary to consider. Although not disagreeing directly with Dahl, O'Donnell finds that Dahl's definition of polyarchy 'is mute with respect to [again] institutional features such as parliamentarism or presidentialism, centralism or federalism, majoritarianism or consensualism, and the presence or absence of a written constitution and judicial review.' As he goes on to explain, although both accountability and the

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[459] Gibson, James L., 'The Russian Dance with Democracy,' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol.17, No.2, Apr.-Jun. 2001, pp. 101-128.
[460] Linz, Juan J., 'Elements of Breakdown,' The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes, (eds.) Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore MD and London, 1978, p. 26.

rule of law are absent in Dahl's definition, O'Donnell does in the end find it appropriate because this definition is a 'crucial cut-off point' and not an all-encompassing ideal.[461]

In the case of some academics who study the post-communist states of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, many times they seek a 'less stringent' definition of democracy to adhere to. Bruce Parrott emphasizes that, with some caveats related to possible ethnic domination, competitive elections with freedom of the press and of assembly could be enough to find a country to be democratic.[462]

Others who examine specifically Russia agree to add other dimensions to strictly applying necessary gauges in order to understand democracy in Russia, such as the quotient of Russia's level of modernity. Richard Rose and Neil Munro's book, Elections Without Order, presents their principal view that follows in that Russia has only an incomplete democracy, in that there are elections but no rule of law, and so therefore Russia is not a modern state.

> 'The great political challenge facing Putin is to build a modern state without using the dictatorship of law to suppress free elections.'[463]

This book has bearing on the relevance of public opinion in assessing the status, evolution and impact of tautology as it stands on the Russian government. While there will be some further discussion on differing depictions of democracy in Russia, their view of Russia as an 'electoral regime' will be used as the best of many definitions in the sections to follow.

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[461] O'Donnell, Guillermo, 'Illusions About Consolidation,' Consolidating the Third-Wave Democracies: Themes and Perspectives, (eds.) Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, Yun-han Chu, and Hung-mao Tien, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore MD, 1997, p. 42. (pp.40-57)
[462] Parrott, Bruce, 'Perspectives on Post-Democratic Democratization,' The Consolidation of Democracy in East-Central Europe, (eds.) Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, pp. 4-5.
[463] Rose, Richard and Neil Munro, Elections Without Order, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002, p. 43.

In the same vein, on the issue of what is, or would be, democracy in Russia, Archie Brown defines six points that Russia must fulfil in order to be a 'democracy,' all of which are necessary to consider. They are: '(1) freedom to form and join organizations, (2) freedom of expression and access to alternative sources of information, (3) the right to vote in free and fair elections, (4) the right to compete in public office, (5) political accountability, and (6) the rule of law.'[464] These represent what could be considered a more refined list of Dahl's requirements tailored for the Russian case.

All six facets of this test are of great important in analysing public opinion and the wars in Chechnya; for example, Brown mentions this point himself in relation to the second test:

> 'During the Chechen war of 1994-6, an Organization of Russian women, the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers, succeeded in getting access to the mass media and exercised some influence in mobilizing public opinion against the war.'[465]

Extending these ideas to an examination of what this means for Russian democracy, and therefore measuring the extent of this 'some influence,' should be examined here. Chapter four in this thesis covering the mass media found that the level of 'some influence' possessed by such groups only was significant when the people (public opinion) were sympathetic to the inherent goals of the 'influence.' During the first war, this was acceptable. During the second war, the 'influence' has been less so. That is to say that, as the people have supported Putin (and his North Caucasus policies), little could be done to change public opinion.

To return to the subject of the consolidation of democracy in Russia, the noted academic on democracy Arend Lijphart, in his 1999 book Patterns of Democracy, has a very loose definition

[464] Brown, Archie, 'Evaluating Russia's Democratization,' Contemporary Russian Politics: A Reader, (ed.) Archie Brown, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001, p. 546.
[465] *Ibid*, p. 550.

of what is considered to be a consolidated democracy. In this book, he compares the status of thirty six established democracies. Indicating that it is slightly arbitrary, Lijphart explains that a country is a consolidated democracy, and therefore worthy of his comparisons, when it has been a democracy for about twenty years (in the nineteen-year cases of India, Papua New Guinea, and Spain he makes exceptions) and it must further have had more than a 'few' elections in which to measure the durability and kinds of cabinets that the democracy produces.[466] Obviously, Russia has not at present reached either of these two requirements, at least in relation to truly fair Presidential elections.

Namely the meaning of consolidation has always been of issue. Much time has been spent debating what is required for a democracy to consolidate.[467] There are generally two approaches to consolidation study, one depending on adaptation of both politicians and citizens to 'democratic rules, norms and procedures' and the second concentrates on the development of democratic institutions.[468]

In terms of comparative democracy and exploring the finer points of examining democracy, few books exceed the detail of Jan-Erik Lane and Svante Ersson's 2004 book: Democracy: A Comparative Approach. On the subject of consolidation, Lane and Ersson refer to 'exogenous factors, or big social forces, and endogenous factors, institutions,' as the hinges on which democratic stability, longevity, or consolidation can be assessed. Further confined to these two ideas, Lane and Ersson focus on three key factors with which a country experiences 'success or failure of the endeavour to consolidate democracy.'[469] These are:

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[466] Lijphart, Arend, Patterns of Democracy, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1999, p. 53.
[467] For a detailed examination of the various facets of this idea, see Kelley, Donald R., 'The Complexity of Democratic Consolidation,' After Communism, (ed.) Donald R. Kelley, University of Arkansas Press, Fayettesville NC, 2003, pp.7-29.
[468] Boussard, Caroline, 'Civil Society and Democratisation,' Development and Democracy, (eds.) Ole Egstrom and Goren Hyden, Routledge, London and New York, 2002, p. 158.
[469] Lane, Jan-Erik and Svante Ersson, Democracy: a Comparative Approach, Routledge, London and New York, 2003, pp. 140-141.

1) Structural factors: poverty, illiteracy, religion and ethnic cleavages
2) Institutional factors: presidentialism, legal system, structure of parliament, constitutional volatility
3) Behavioural factors: the making of pacts, consensus building, like temporary grand coalitions, the granting of amnesties.[470]

These factors have cogency in the Russian case. By Lane and Ersson's criteria, it could be maintained that Russia has some fewer negative exogenous factors, for instance true poverty or illiteracy, but also (as seen from evolving government policy on the Chechen war) excessive negative endogenous factors, such as the lack of a progressive legal system and certain elements of constitutional volatility.

Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, in their article 'Toward Consolidated Democracies,' have 'three minimal conditions' for even considering a consolidation of democracy. These conditions are that the country should be: 1) a state, 2) a completed democratic transition as defined by Dahl's requirements, and 3) its rulers must govern democratically, meaning that officials should follow the rules. They spell out that 'only democracies can become consolidated democracies.' Only once all three requirements have been attained can a democracy begin to consolidate and mature to an extent. Without one or more of those prerequisites, such a state is outside the bounds of the democratic fringe.

Further to this, Linz and Stepan prefer the 'only game in town' standard for defining democratic consolidation, meaning that basically in every way, democracy in a country is the central basis with no available alternative.

[470] *Ibid*, p. 141.

In practice, Linz and Stepan further give five requirements for consolidation beyond a 'functioning state.'[471] These are:

1) civil society
2) political society
3) rule of law
4) state bureaucracy
5) economic society

In ways agreeing with Lane and Ersson, as Linz and Stepan write in their 1996 book, Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation:

> 'Many scholars, in advancing definitions of consolidated democracy, enumerate all the regime characteristics that would improve the overall quality of democracy. We favour, instead, a narrower definition of democratic consolidation, but one that nonetheless combines behavioural, attitudinal, and constitutional dimension.'[472]

Furthermore in their book, Linz and Stepan do not preclude the possibility of the breakdown of a consolidated democracy or even seek to maintain that there can be only one *type* of consolidated democracy.

However acting as one standard for understanding consolidation of democracy, Linz and Stepan's factors will be examined in relation to the subject of the arguments presented in this paper. They explain in the chapter of their book on Russia a number of elements that necessarily

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[471] Linz, Juan and Alfred Stepan, 'Toward Consolidated Democracies,' *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 7, No. 2, April 1996, pp. 14-33.
[472] Linz, Juan J. and Alfred Stepan, Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore MD and London, 1996, p. 5.

need further investigation over the course of this thesis: what they call the 'privileging' of 'Independence over Democratization,' 'Collective Rights over Individual Rights,' and 'Economic Restructuring over Democratic State Restructuring.'[473] All of these decisions over what to promote against what to marginalize have a basis in attempting a greater understanding of Russian public opinion in the context of the two wars in Chechnya.

Andreas Schedler, in his landmark article 'What is Democratic Consolidation?' has a four-level classification system for identifying levels of consolidation in democracies. These are (in order):

1) Advanced Democracy
2) Liberal Democracy
3) Electoral Democracy
4) Authoritarian Regime

In consideration of this classification system, this thesis questions whether one can call any country a democracy without a viable rule of law. On the basis of the absence of this factor in Schedler's system, subscription will be paid more in this thesis to Rose and Munro's phrase 'electoral regime' to examine Russia, as opposed to Schedler's less clearly-defined 'electoral democracy,' which he describes as 'any kind of *diminished subtype* of democracy'[474] above an acknowledged authoritarian regime.

Within the scope of this thesis, keeping these elements in mind, a continuing debate on the consolidation of Russian democracy will be necessary to show to what degree the Russian government's Chechen war policy has damaged or supported this consolidation.

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[473] *Ibid*, pp. 366-400.
[474] Schedler, Andreas, 'What is Democratic Consolidation?' *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 9, No. 2, Apr. 1998, pp. 91-107.

Herein, for the sake of the inclusive value of this research, there must also be a comparative aspect connected to this thesis. How does Russian democratic consolidation parallel the experiences of other recent post-Communist countries, and how does this reference impact on Russian public opinion concerning the situation in Chechnya?

Fritz Plasser, Peter A. Ulram and Harald Waldrauch in their book Democratic Consolidation in East-Central Europe have much data for such a discussion.[475] Particularly their chapter on political participation and integration is very interesting given that in all of the reform countries they studied in the early years after Communism:

> 'Studies on the initial stages of democratic transformation and current data both show that citizens' participatory orientations and their belief in their own civic competence are still underdeveloped in the new democracies.'[476]

Also acknowledged that:

> 'The mass media play an especially important role in the consolidation process because the confidence gaps which exist between citizens and political institutions are often wide, the structures of political integration are deficient, and the need for orientation is acute.'[477]

When looking at evolving Russian public opinion, the Chechen wars, and how this affects the eminence of democratic consolidation within Russia, these factors are acute bases from which to understand these subjects within this thesis. The experiences of the post-Communist eastern

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[475] Plasser, Fritz, Peter A. Ulram and Harald Waldrauch, Democratic Consolidation in East-Central Europe, Macmillan Press Ltd., Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York, 1998.
[476] *Ibid*, p. 134.
[477] *Ibid*, p. 129.

European countries that Plasser, Ulram and Waldrauch cover do mirror some of the processes that affected many aspects of the Russian case. The mass media, as detailed in chapter four, failed in the post-Soviet era to maintain their integrity and bridge any prevailing 'gap' in 'political integration' between the public and the government.

To the degree that Russia is becoming a 'democracy,' Valerie Bunce finds on the subject of comparing Russian democracy to other emerging post-communist states that Russia has its own position within the four generalizations that she finds applicable to the region. Given the complexity of the past experiences of all the former communist nations of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, Bunce remarks upon the brilliant 'diversity' of those countries emerging from communism. Further, she finds where the appeal of democracy is quite durable, or as she calls it 'sticky' then as increased democratic ideals are realized in these states, it is more difficult for potential authoritarian elements to over-ride them. Thirdly, Bunce finds that the viability of the state is necessary for democracy. Listing the Russian Federation among the extreme cases of weak states, she comments on the failure of the Russian state to have a monopoly on many basic elements of statehood as an example. Fourthly, Bunce finds that a guiding sense of nationalism is essential to continuing democratisation, as she notes in the case of many Eastern European states.[478]

In the case of Russia, particularly Bunce's fourth generalisation has added prominence, as is explained by Raymond Taras in his own chapter on Russian nationalism where he finds that in many ways Russia is a state without a nation. In this argument in relation to the Russian nation's relative indecision in determining its own status, Taras finds that the 'traditional imperial style of rule' has merely been put into a 'new institutional framework.'[479] Noting the inherent

[478] Bunce, Valerie, 'Comparative Democratization: Lessons from the Post-Socialist Experience,' After Communism, (ed.) Donald R. Kelley, University of Arkansas Press, Fayettesville NC, 2003, pp. 31-60.
[479] Taras, Raymond, 'A Decade of Nonnationalism?,' After Communism, (ed.) Donald R. Kelley, University of Arkansas Press, Fayettesville NC, 2003, p. 222.

undemocratic nature of imperial rule from the centre has connection to Bunce's generalization, the lack of internal stability on the issue of national self-determination in post-Soviet Russia has negatively affected any clear realization of what the Russian state should be.

When all is considered, it is unquestioned that Russia is an incomplete democracy, but to what degree? When tested, elements of almost all gauges applied in order to assess the extensiveness of Russian democracy as compared to Western democracies fall short. In analysing Russian public opinion on the two Chechen wars, these facets must be acknowledged. Particularly, it must be examined to what degree the Russian government is responsive to its citizenry. And in return, how low is political accountability? The freedoms enjoyed by the Russian public are highly variable within the context of this degree of Russian democracy. Previous chapters have shown that freedom of the press, of assembly and of expression are in varying stages of permissibility, according to access by civil groups, according to the specific issue at hand and in respect to the given region in focus.

M. Steven Fish makes a parallel examination of Russian 'democracy' along these lines in his 2005 book titled Democracy Derailed in Russia. As predictable from the book title, Fish has a low view of Russian democracy based in part on his criticism of 'superpresidentialism,'[480] which this thesis entirely agrees with in some ways, however, this writing seeks to take another look at this topic, as corresponding to research conducted and to what other academics have written.

James L. Gibson paints however a more optimistic view of Russian democracy. He points out that while Russia is far from having a 'perfectly functioning democratic system,' Russia is

[480] Fish, M. Steven, Democracy Derailed in Russia, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York, 2005, pp. 224-243. Fish's two other 'variables' that 'explain Russia's failure to democratize,' which are 'too much oil' and 'too little economic liberalization,' provide little basis for direct argument in the context of this thesis. See Fish, Democracy Derailed in Russia, p. 247.

'developing most of the institutions and processes of a viable democratic regime.'[481] In some ways, such optimism in the case of Russia has been found in this thesis to be premature. This article published in 2001, while not expressing anything false, does not take account of some elements of rollback in Russian democracy, as characterised (again in chapter four) by new laws of that era which put additional limits on civil society and the press. Over time, the amplification of the global war on terrorism as portrayed by Putin (see chapter two) has solidified this deviation from democracy, as has been argued in this thesis.

For the purposes of this paper, Russia will be acknowledged to have many elements of democracy as expressed by Dahl, but yet, as to be discussed in more detail, a weak grasp on civil society and lacking many elements necessary for a liberal democracy which is accountable to the people. Again, the phrase 'electoral regime' as discussed by Rose and Munro will be considered to be the most accurate of many choices in this paper's discussion of what is Russia's democracy.

Ultimately, the final debate in this thesis when dealing with democratisation is to answer the same question that Timothy Colton and Michael McFaul asked in their paper 'Are Russians Undemocratic?,'[482] but taking into account specifically a study of differences in Russia public opinion on the two Chechen wars. Colton and McFaul find that Russia is becoming fundamentally more democratic from the bottom up, through their assertion, 'Represent the will of the people within the state, and the institutions will follow.' However, research in this thesis has found that the will of the people has been ignored through Russia's continuing policies in Chechnya; that the presentation of the Chechen problem has been a manipulated paper tiger used

[481] Gibson, James L., 'The Russian Dance With Democracy,' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 17, No. 2, Apr..-Jun. 2001, p. 102. (pp. 101-128)
[482] Colton, Timothy J. and Michael McFaul, 'Are Russians Undemocratic?,' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 18, No. 2, Apr.-Jun. 2002, pp. 91-121.

for the advantages of a select few to gain greater control over the many at the expense of Russia as a developing democracy.

Theoretically, as told by Colton and McFaul, democracy in Russia has tended to continue to develop somewhat through the consolidation of the idea of democracy and through institutional consolidation. However, this research finds this to be incorrect, that any democratic evolution has been going rather badly. Previous democratic theory tells us that without rule of law, democracy is impossible. Russia fits this theory. With a view that the ends justifies the means, study in this thesis has found that Russian public opinion, crossing researched cleavages (chapter three) on the war, has accepted restrictions on the media (chapters two and four) in order that a strong President can take care of the Chechen 'problem.' Democracy therefore has been sacrificed in favor of order.

Electorates and Electoral Systems

Some study must be conducted on the issue of the electoral system, and the role of this in understanding Russian public opinion and the Chechen wars. Chapter four explored the changing efforts of the Russian government to affect Russian public opinion regarding the two wars in Chechnya; this section will examine the existence of Russian public opinion as a political force, if Russia is indeed any type of 'democracy' deriving legitimacy from the people.

Using Rose and Munro's definition of Russia as an 'electoral regime,'[483] therefore without the cohesive civil society of a liberal democracy, then where does this leave public opinion? In a government where there are elections, but few other semblances of a democratic state including the rule of law, elected officials can have little to no accountability to the people who elect them.

[483] Rose, Richard and Neil Munro, Elections Without Order, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002, p. 60.

There are few rules to the 'game,' and as can be shown by Russia's party system, it can be difficult to throw out the political 'bad guys' if there is confusion in the electorate in establishing to what party the 'bad guys' belong, or even what system the 'bad guys' are elected in (or even further perhaps, with the possible anti-democratic question as to whether the 'bad guys' are elected).

Timothy Colton's book on Transitional Citizens: Voters and What Influences Them in the New Russia is excellent on this subject in that it explores the many aspects in which Russians exist as citizens of Russia, and therefore as an electorate. For example, Colton explores the nature of the electoral and political divide in Russian society, including an analysis of what the political left and right consists of:

> 'In Russia, the words "conservative" and "liberal" are fresh imports into the language that seldom infiltrate political debate, except in rarefied intellectual circles.'[484]

In this vein, it has been found that political debate on the Chechen war will have some bearing on any understanding of political left or right. Putin's hold on the centre and his prosecution of the war seems in this context to be outside of such boundaries.

Caroline Boussard argues that those who adhere to and study democracy in electoral regimes like Russia's are probably more 'concerned with democratic stability in terms of avoiding democratic breakdown, the opposite of democratic consolidation' than with strengthening the depth of democracy. On the other hand, Boussard alleges that those who 'work in liberal democracies' worry more about the deepening of democracy. In simpler terms, she argues about whether

[484] Colton, Timothy, Transitional Citizens: Voters and What Influences Them in the New Russia, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA and London, 2001, p. 144.

people working in electoral versus liberal democracies are on the offensive (in the case of liberal democracies) or defensive (as in the case of electoral democracies).[485]

While this is a good point concerning perhaps Central America that is Boussard's field, Russia does not fit with this theory. The fact that there would be democracy in the form of simply elections, consisting of regular or semi-regular election cycles has rarely been at issue in Russia; this perhaps stemming in part from authoritarian Soviet 'election' times. In the Yeltsin era despite the fact that there were those who argued for postponing elections, the question of whether or not to have elections generally has been considered always a line that should not be crossed.

Deepening democracy and civil society most often has been the primary concern in Russia; consolidating the base of an evolving Russian democratic regime always has been the central matter, without allowing the government to control external and internal influences on its citizens. To not allow Russia to become locked into a governmentally dominated 'democracy' in which elections are predictably pro-incumbent has been the major challenge.

Accountability is a serious problem in Russia's fledgling democracy. This is the case when looking at the structure of Russia's electoral system characterized by Rose and Munro as 'floating,'[486] meaning that Russia's party system has changed between every election and especially in great 'fluidity' before the Putin era. Parties have come and gone according to the whims of the personalities of political elites. Future President Putin's own flagship Unity party of 1999, even though he himself was not a member, was created only months earlier.

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[485] Boussard, Caroline, 'Civil Society and Democratisation,' Development and Democracy, (eds.) Ole Egstrom and Goren Hyden, Routledge, London and New York, 2002, pp. 156 – 172.
[486] Rose, Richard and Neil Munro, Elections Without Order, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002, p. 118.

Furthermore, Rose and Munro find that there are indeed even four 'systems'[487] of election in Russia, each according to ways one can be elected to office. The electorate in this maelstrom has a distinct lack of ways of deciding 'collective control of decision-making in government.'[488] Hence, a parliamentary deputy could be put into office in a myriad of different ways, not all of which presupposing any responsibility to any cleavage or section of the electorate. In this atmosphere, Russia's electoral regime has a clear bias towards the incumbent elite, which is, while not unbreakable, certainly difficult to overcome.

Therefore, Russian public opinion has little basis in establishing accountability in electing officials. Any critical view of the Putin administration can see clearly how Putin himself was picked by Yeltsin and his allies in order to avoid what they projected as possible 'instability' in the government that might spill over into Russian life. The Russian public, in their role for this order, accepted this bargain and in turn elected Putin. The political system did not guarantee stability, and so the people not surprisingly chose stability. As seen in previous chapters, the war in Chechnya became an archetype of 'stability' as long as the President in charge was seen to have a firm grip on the affair.

This reinforces the issue that the Russian people had little real choice in the matter. There was no progressive opposition, and especially true in an electoral regime such as Russia's, democracy in some ways is only as good as the relative strength of the opponent.

This is however not the case because of a lack of a developing potential for partisanship and party loyalty in Russian society. Such an argument is applicable to a study of Russian democracy in relation to the Chechen wars in that any arising opposition would be greatly aided by some degree of party political loyalty in Russian society.

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[487] *Ibid*, pp. 103-104.
[488] *Ibid*, p. 101.

Ted Brader and Joshua Tucker, in an article for the *American Journal of Political Science*, challenge any contention that Russian society might be in some ways 'anti-party.' Using a three-pronged system applied to the voting public for finding the existence of 'emerging partisanship,' Brader and Tucker attempt to gauge how a democratic electoral system might be growing in Russia. They seek such traits in the electorate:[489]

1) 'a cumulative effect of political experience'
2) 'consistency in one's attitudes'
3) the people must be able and willing to make 'rational' decisions in regard to party affiliation

From this point, Brader and Tucker find that:

> 'Based on evidence from national surveys conducted during Russia's first post-communist elections, we argue that nascent partisanship is visible among a sizable plurality of the Russian electorate.'[490]

In this context, the Russian system is not so alien to the possibility of a party/electoral arrangement as sometimes portrayed if other environmental variables, such as 'real' stable parties, would be established. Further study herein finds generally, however, that other necessary requirements for partisanship in society will not be satisfied.

Michael McFaul and Timothy Colton explore the continuing viability of Russia's electoral system in their 2003 book on the 1999 and 2000 Russian elections. Particularly interesting is

[489] Brader, Ted and Joshua A Tucker, 'The Emergence of Mass Partisanship in Russia, 1993-1996,' *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 45, No. 1, Jan. 2001, pp. 70-71. (pp. 69-83)
[490] *Ibid*, p. 78.

their finding that the Communists have become little more than a 'fixture'[491] in Russian political life and not an inspiring force of any power. Other parties that might have opposed Putin's Unity bloc in these elections quickly lost their viability as opponents, thereby demonstrating their own fragility of support. This book has been referred to in arguments made in this thesis regarding the status of Russian political life and how this applies to public opinion and the evolving situation in Chechnya.

In conclusion, research for this thesis has found that, given the possibility of a stable party system, the Russian electorate has always seemed ready to accept a nominal level of partisanship. However, with the dominance of elites in Russian government, such stability largely has been elusive. Data demonstrated in chapter three found that differences in opinion on the Chechen war have correlated with party loyalty. However, as political accountability has been absent and with the lack of rule of law, Russia's developing electoral system has been stalemated by Putin's incumbent control of the centre, inherited from Yeltsin for purposes of maintaining order, and not on principles of democracy.

Federalism and Constitutional Maintenance

Questions on the wars in Chechnya and the issue of secession within Russia are critical to this paper. These concepts have been used in successive Russian presidential administrations to gain more power and to move Russia back away from some principles of democracy towards authoritarianism. At different junctures, the Yeltsin and Putin administrations promoted maintenance of constitutional order as a reason for the war in Chechnya. Examining this as an issue is of importance in any analysis of the Chechen wars in Russian political thought.

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[491] Colton, Timothy J. and Michael McFaul, Popular Choice and Managed Democracy: The Russian Elections of 1999 and 2000, The Brookings Institution, Washington DC, 2003, p. 137. McFaul examined this topic also in his previous book and will be of interest of further examination: see McFaul, Michael, Russia's Unfinished Revolution: Political Change From Gorbachev to Putin, Cornell University Press, Ithaca NY and London, 2001.

The formation of Russia's democratic government is an imperative matter here. In scrutinizing Russia's status as a 'federation,' Cameron Ross comments on how 'the Russian Federation has one of the highest levels of asymmetry in the world.' This is not surprising, as he points out; Russia is the 'largest multinational country in the world incorporating 128 officially recognized minority groups and nationalities.' Over the course of his book, Federalism and Democratisation in Russia, Ross adeptly explains how Russia has a 'high level of asymmetry' in three areas: 1) socio-economic, 2) political, and 3) constitutional.[492] Parallel to this, Boris Kagarlitsky's Russia Under Yeltsin and Putin (2002)[493] also frequently addressed these questions in terms of the inherent stability therein.

Another factor to be addressed when discussing relations between the centre and the periphery is the difference between 'russkie' and 'rossiiane.' It is the distinction between, respectively, ethnic Russians, and the citizens of the Russian Federation including those who are not ethnically Russian. In his book Russian Messianism, Peter Duncan writes:

> 'Part of the Yeltsin's leadership's strategy to win the support of the ethnic minorities was to create a new civic Russian (*rossiiskaia*) identity and to refer to the citizens of the new state as *rossiiane* (inhabitants of Russia) rather than *russkie* (ethnic Russians).'[494]

Studying regional identity is of great importance in understanding elements of Russian public opinion in contemporary Russia. Especially in chapter three, where the unity and cleavages of Russian public opinion have been discussed, differences in regional thought and perceptions were analysed. For instance, in reference to Tatarstan (which was another centre of secessionist

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[492] Quotes from Ross, Cameron, Federalism and Democratisation in Russia, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 2002, pp. 7 –8.
[493] Kagarlitsky, Boris, Russia Under Yeltsin and Putin, Pluto Press, London and Sterling VA, 2002.
[494] Duncan, Peter J. S., Russian Messianism, Routledge, London and New York, 2000, p. 131.

thought at the formation of the post-Soviet Russian Federation), Leokadia Drobizheva, Director of the Institute of Sociology at the Russian Academy of Sciences, finds that greater percentages identify with the Republic of Tatarstan than with the Russian Federation.[495] Nevertheless, after the example of Chechnya, few would believe that Tatarstan would ever seriously consider secession itself. This phenomenon of Chechnya as an 'example' is prominent in this thesis.

Russia has had a great deal of struggle in working this asymmetry into a viable government. The fight between regions and the centre and between the branches of government has been fierce at times, on occasion requiring a number of 'band-aids,' both extensive and slight. In respect to Russia's problems with the Chechnya situation, the struggle of the regions against the centre has been a dominant characteristic since the first enterprising Russian set foot in the North Caucasus.

Looking at Russia's strong presidency, James Hughes has argued that the high level of political asymmetry has been necessary for cementing governmental stability. Regarding Chechnya as an exception rather than as something representative of a more endemic problem, he counters some implications suggested by Dahl, Linz and others that argue that strong presidentialism is representative of instability.[496] In fact, Hughes claims that Russia's type of government could not be maintained without the dominant central executive. In his opinion:

> 'it is doubtful whether any other alternative institutional arrangement [apart from Russia's powerful presidency] would work as well for transition to democracy in an ethnically or territorially divided society.'[497]

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[495] Drobizheva, L., 'Etnicheskaia i respublikanskaia identichnost' problemie' sovmestimosti,' Regional'niie protsesi v sovremennoi Rossii: ekonomika, politika, vlast', Rossiiskaia Akademiia Nauk, Moskva, 2003, p. 15 (pp. 11-29)

[496] In reference to Dahl and Linz's arguments discussed previously, Hughes suggests that some of their 'requirements' for improving democracy could be sacrificed in order to improve others.

[497] Hughes, James, 'Federalism and Transition to Democracy in Russia,' *CEU Working Paper IRES No. 99/1*, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary, Apr. 1998, p. 35.

As Hughes suggests, this idea requires the type of benign President that Russia had at the time: Yeltsin was willing to make compromises, sign treaties with constituent ethnic and non-ethnic 'Russian Federation' members, and was rarely if ever a ready dictator that could have taken advantage of nationalism and driven more ethnic divides in society as with Milosevic in Yugoslavia. Apart from this however, such a point is prominent in the context of this paper in reference to Putin.

The question of a constitution was an early point of contention in post-Soviet Russia, in its design eventually borrowing ideas from once-unimaginable sources; as is well known for the 1993 Constitution, Russia uses some structural characteristics of the American constitution.[498] In the context of the establishment of the 1993 constitution, however, Cameron Ross writes:

> 'In Russia, as we have seen, there is little evidence of consensus and compromise in the drafting of its Constitution. Instead, the foundations of Russian constitutionalism were forged out of conflict and coercion, and the President's Constitution was largely imposed on a weak and divided society, still reeling from the shock of the violent dissolution of the Russian parliament.'[499]

In respect to public opinion, although it was passed by voters, Ross points out that there was another 'major drawback.' He accurately points out that a majority rejected the constitution in sixteen regions and in eight republics. Further to this, there was boycott of the vote in Chechnya.[500] Such outcomes suggest that the Constitution of 1993 lacked a degree of legitimacy in sectional areas where this was a result.

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[498] Among other systemic similarities, one only needs to look at the first line of the 1993 Russian Constitution: 'We, the multinational people of the Russian Federation…' Translation from: Sakwa, Richard, Russian Politics and Society, 2nd edition, Routledge, London and New York, 1996, p. 395.
[499] Ross, Cameron, Federalism and Democratisation in Russia, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 2002, p. 29.
[500] *Ibid*, p. 31.

Reform of Russia's federal structure has been an ongoing issue, and has been part of Putin's supposed re-institution of order. As Remington states:

> '[...]the relations between the central government and the governments of regions and republics continue to evolve. President Putin made it clear that the reform of federal relations was a top priority for him.'[501]

Putin's introduction in 2000 of the seven 'federal districts' was one of the first steps towards the 're-institution of order' goal, having the effect of bringing the laws of the regions more into line with the centre. With no other natural policy or tradition of cohesion between them, Putin had no doubt found that having to deal with 89 regions on separate terms was a task too complicated without another level of control.

Further, the question of separatism is a critical issue at the heart of Russian thought on the Chechen wars. After the fall of the Soviet Union, many Russians were not sure what form their country should take. Russian public support had always been for maintenance of the Union, but few advocated force to enact this. Given that many elites and, generally, public opinion in the Soviet republics sought independence, especially given the circumstances surrounding the 1991 coup, Russians were forced to endure a substantial de-imperialization. In contrast to other historical world empires, as Graham Smith has written:

> 'For Russians, the territory that constituted the Soviet Union – unlike the classical empires of Britain, Portugal or even France – had long been considered an integral and largely undifferentiated part of Russia.'[502]

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[501] Remington, Thomas F., Politics in Russia, 3rd edition, Pearson Longman, New York, 2004, p. 77.

As he himself points out, one could possibly argue with Smith in this statement about the French, Algeria was claimed indomitably French by a segment of the French population (leading to war against De Gaulle), nevertheless the statement rings true.

From a strictly empirical perspective, also unlike Algeria, no significant segment of the Russian public was seriously dedicated to using troops to hold on to the former Soviet republics. This led to a peaceful rollback of the Russian empire as this issue was confronted in the context of the former Soviet Union. Although as to be seen by Chechnya itself, even this peaceful de-imperialization had its own limits. For Yeltsin, this de-imperialization meant the boundaries of the former Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. Smith says that, in the main, Russian public opinion has agreed with this assessment.

> 'While the majority of Russians have adjusted to the loss of the former Soviet borderlands, the idea of losing part of Russia is regarded by most as wholly unacceptable.'[503]

Matthew Evangelista in an article for *Post-Soviet Affairs* entitled, 'Is Putin the New de Gaulle?' focuses specifically on this comparison between the war in Algeria and the Chechen wars. Evangelista, while finding some useful points of interest in regard to this comparison 'particularly concerning questions of leadership and missed opportunities,' found that his study yet 'does not yield any obvious prediction for the future of the conflict.'[504]

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[502] Smith, Graham, The Post-Soviet States; Mapping the Politics of Transition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, p. 47.
[503] *Ibid*, p. 49.
[504] Evangelista, Matthew, 'Is Putin the New de Gaulle? A Comparison of the Chechen and Algerian Wars,' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, V. H. Winston and Son, Inc., Vol. 21, No. 4, Oct.-Dec. 2005, pp. 360-377.

Smith additionally points out that the failure of the first Chechen war to achieve a meaningful victory has:

> '[...]severely dented Russian national pride but also failed to guarantee Russia's future control over what most Russians viewed as an integral part of their homeland.'[505]

Nonetheless, why did the first Chechen war become so unpopular? This paper disagreed with Smith. As explained in other chapters (and particularly chapter two), Russian public opinion did not in some ways oppose independence for Chechnya if the Chechens were willing to fight to the death for it.

Indeed, Chechnya was seen by many Russians as part of Russia, but it was not an issue of the greatest importance worthy to be fought for and kept at all potential cost, especially if it could be stable as a state and politically contained in the region (in direct contrast to other post-communist cases, such as the Serbs' sentimental arguments for keeping Kosovo within Serbia's borders). Only with the advent of groups inside Chechnya seeking to expand the boundaries of Chechnya into other sections of the Russian Federation combined with Islamic extremism was Russian public opinion willing to support a long period of war there.

In their book, From Submission to Rebellion, Vladimir Shlapentokh, Roman Levita, and Mikhail Loiberg discuss many facets of Russian regionalisation versus the centre in the post-Soviet era. They make many valid points, but of greatest value is their study of how:

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[505] Smith, Graham, The Post-Soviet States; Mapping the Politics of Transition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, p. 49.

'[...]the ideology of Russian regionalism was somewhat influenced by Russians' feelings of being discriminated against and by the privileged status of non-Russians in the Soviet Union and in the Russian Federation.'[506]

This clashing viewpoint becomes necessary in building an understanding of one reason why Russians took different viewpoints on Chechnya between the two wars. A larger percentage of Russian public opinion thought that during the first war, Chechnya was not of great importance to the stability of Russia. After 1999, public opinion took a less isolationist view; for many, the war in Chechnya became a serious issue that could, without intervention, become a dangerous threat to internal order.

During the second war, for a number of reasons many Russians came to realize that perhaps it was a clear necessity that, at whatever the price, Chechnya had to be 'tamed.' One reason is because the Chechens forced the issue. This has been discussed in previous chapters, such as in chapters two and four. Parallel to this, Russian public opinion came to accept a seemingly higher level of relative authoritarianism to accomplish this and other failures of the state structure. James Hughes's argument again comes into play. In theory, perhaps Russians were willing to sacrifice some elements of democracy to further others.

Contrasts were shown between Putin's second war in Chechnya and Boris Yeltsin's first war. Did democratisation make Russia more or less likely to go to war? This topic is discussed extensively in a paper by Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder entitled, 'Democratization and the Danger of War.'[507] Far from the traditional assumption that democracies are less likely to embark on military excursions (and argued in 1995 no less, when this principle was held more

[506] Shlapentokh, Vladimir, Roman Levita, and Mikhail Loiberg, From Submission to Rebellion, Westview Press, Boulder CO, 1997, p. 161.
[507] Mansfield, Edward D. and Jack Snyder, 'Democratization and the Danger of War,' *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 1, Summer 1995, pp. 5-38.

dearly and many years before the US adventures in Afghanistan and Iraq), Mansfield and Snyder find that particularly democratising entities may in some circumstances be as prone to war as authoritarian states, even though democratised states are safest in the long run.

In terms of this thesis, this assertion is particularly interesting in view of Yeltsin and Putin's policy on the Chechen war. The rise of Putin has been a significant change between the two wars in Chechnya and has merit in study for further understanding the existence, evolution and differences of Russian public opinion. Although strictly speaking, Putin came to power by constitutionally prescribed means, there was not a truly fair democratic election in the contemporary Western sense.[508] The potency of the war issue as a divisive subject of internal public opinion judgment in regard to each Russian administration as such is paramount herein.

In regard to constitutionalism and federalism, what parts of these ideas are considered more or less important by Russian public opinion? Again, this thesis has found that elements of these principles supporting 'order' have triumphed over elements supporting democracy.

Through looking at the issue of the Chechen wars, the Russian people have been found in all chapters of this thesis to prefer a 'strong' state over perceptions of weakness conveyed by (but not the theory of) free partisanship in fair elections where incumbency was not an advantage. Therefore, constitutionalism and federalism (in the Russian case, the two concepts together combining to form a vague, albeit incompletely-defined, 'strong' centralism) has dominated to counter the perceived failure of a de-imperialized post-Soviet Russia. Where the constitution and the federal system have been silent or unstable, the *modus operandi* of encroaching presidential government has been busy.

[508] For one of many detailed analyses of Putin's rise, see Rutland, Peter, 'Putin's Path to Power,' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 16, No. 4, Oct.-Dec. 2000, pp. 313-354.

Civil Liberties and Corruption .

The Russian public especially during the first war in Chechnya lived during a period that many could describe as being unstable and even anarchic on occasion. Russian governmental officials, police and civil servants many times were corrupt, as has been mentioned over the course of this thesis. During the second war, in which Putin has attempted to enforce some degree of 'order' apparently to counter the anarchy of the Yeltsin era, this state of affairs arguably has changed very little. What role has Russian public opinion to play in this idea and how do the Chechen wars relate to this study? In the context of this chapter, has this topic affected Russia's post-Soviet democratisation?

As argued before, social practice in post-Soviet Russia has been absent a clearly defined rule of law. In his chapter on 'Social Relations and Political Practices in post-Communist Russia,' Michael Urban discusses social life in Russia in relation to this. Urban discusses the 'grey zone' in reference to 'arenas in the social world in which practices are neither unconditionally permitted nor proscribed.' This is natural in all countries, but usually quite contained. However, in Russia, Urban finds that the 'grey zone' is 'especially large.' As representative of this, based on the research of Leonid Fituni, Urban uses the figure of 45 percent of GDP in 1997.[509]

Urban continues on to say that:

> 'The size of the grey zone is conditioned by the fact that in actual practice-rather than on paper-the state has failed to draw firm lines separating permitted from proscribed behaviours.'[510]

[509] Quotes from: Urban, Michael, 'Social Relations and Political Practices in Post-Communist Russia,' After Communism, (ed.) Donald R. Kelley, University of Arkansas Press, Fayettesville NC, 2003, p. 133.
[510] *Ibid*, p. 133.

Thereby, even among those who might use this gray zone frequently themselves, some mythologized that it was not that way during Soviet times and that there was greater order (as in an absence of corruption). Of course, during the Marxist era, the corruption of the economy was theoretically proscribed. Reality of the past was quite different, in reference to the Brezhnev era:

> 'Central state direction of the economy was, at least in part, belied by growing black- and grey-market economies and even in the official state economy control by the centre was less than complete as the operational reality of the economy deviated substantially from that described in the official plan and planning system.'[511]

The grey area has always existed in Russia, but it definitely peaked in the Yeltsin era. The estimate of 45 percent of GDP is an amazingly high figure compared to Western countries, and this paper will save a debate on this number for the economists amongst us as this figure is even perhaps difficult to believe, but nevertheless probably not impossible.

For a more extensive study of the existence of what is often referred to as 'informal practices' in Russian society, the best source can be found in Alena Ledeneva's book, How Russia Really Works. As Ledeneva argues, 'informal practices were an integral part of post-socialist transformation.' Continuing on:

> 'These [informal] practices were not simply illegal but integrated the law into political, media, and business technologies, often manipulatively. Similarly, they did not simply follow or contradict informal norms but relied on some of them and played one set of norms against the other.'[512]

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[511] Bova, Russell, 'Democratization and the Crisis of the Russian State,' State-Building in Russia: The Yeltsin Legacy and the Challenge of the Future, (ed.) Gordon B. Smith, M.E. Sharpe Inc. Armonk NY and London, 1999, p. 26.

[512] Ledeneva, Alena V., How Russia Really Works, Cornell University Press, Ithaca NY and London, 2006, p.190.

During the Chechen war, this 'grey zone' was naturally applied to the war, war-related issues, and the ability to speak out against the war. Stories abound of how reporters were able to bribe their way across the battlefield with a pocket full of roubles and a few bottles of booze. At the same time as initiating the war, the Yeltsin government was seen as being 'in the pocket' of high-level businessmen who were stealing from the people. The state was falling apart, and widely disseminated reports from Chechnya showed young Russians dying *en masse* from senseless military strategies and rotted military hardware (as to be explored in greater detail later in this thesis), cut down by Chechens who bragged about their own sharpened wartime abilities.

Russian public opinion of course, as typical in many such societies, had no desire to tolerate this relative anarchy. In the context of an unpopular war (something not experienced by other Eastern European democratising countries, except the parts of the former Yugoslavia), this situation was somewhat predictable. As Huntington writes in reference to problems with democratisation:

> 'Democratisation involves the removal of state constraints on individual behaviour, a loosening of social inhibitions, and uncertainty and confusion about standards of morality. By weakening state authority, as it must, democratisation also brings into question authority in general and can promote an amoral, laissez faire, or 'anything goes' atmosphere. Hence, although the evidence is sketchy and unsystematic, democratisation appears to involve an increase in socially undesirable behavior, including crime and drug use, and possibly to encourage disintegration of the family and other bastions of collective authority.'[513]

[513] Huntington, Samuel, 'Democracy for the Long Haul,' *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.7, No.2, Apr. 1996, p.7. (pp. 3-13)

From most reports, Russians, and especially the older generations, found this gap in authority and lack of order to be appalling. The Soviet era began to look better in comparison. Many felt humiliated: feeling the loss of superpower status, the failure of the state to provide the elaborate array of benefits according to the understood social contract put even in the constitution, pensioners not receiving their pensions and workers not receiving their salaries. At the same time, society was heavy with corruption, many times without even the semblance of government officials hiding their profiteering as in Soviet times (See again Urban's research and analysis).

Russell Bova writes accurately in his chapter on 'Democratization and the Crisis of the Russian State' that in the Soviet period 'the state was everything, and everything was the state.' Continuing into the post-Soviet period (as this book was published in 1999), 'elements of this Russian and Soviet tradition linger to this day.'

Despite this, Bova finds that:

> 'And yet, despite this constitutionally powerful Russian presidency and the expanding state apparatus through which the president governs, for many Russians the central political problem is a very weak state.'[514]

Fear of anarchy is a distinct element of Russian public opinion on the issue of war in Chechnya, and public opinion changes in relation to the level and immediacy of the problem felt in Russia's struggle for putting down the Chechen resistance. A stable state in Chechnya becomes not the issue; Russian public opinion believes that the dominant priority is that a 'bandit' Islamic state should not be allowed, especially one containing perhaps the next Osama Bin Laden.

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[514] Bova, Russell, 'Democratization and the Crisis of the Russian State,' State-Building in Russia: The Yeltsin Legacy and the Challenge of the Future, (ed.) Gordon B. Smith, M.E. Sharpe Inc. Armonk NY and London, 1999, p. 18.

Development of a capable civil society in Russia has been put forward as a necessity in consolidating Russian democracy and countering state dominance. However, as Boussard points out using Nicaragua as an example, 'civil society does not necessarily serve democracy.'[515] Her valid point is that an inefficient state does not mean the public will automatically turn to civil society, as in the case of Nicaragua where inefficient government led to citizens turning away from both political institutions *and* civil institutions. In the Russian case, where precisely order often seems the prominent desire of the public, this is however less of a problem. Just to have a developed civil society in the first place to counter the state on occasion would be of the greatest importance.

As Stephen White wrote in his book Russia's New Politics, some elements of Russian public opinion were never adverse to the institution of order as some have suggested, even in 1991 during the August Coup attempt. Only in Moscow and St. Petersburg were there substantial immediate changes. In some of the outlying regions, as has been important in other discussions in this paper, some totalitarian regimes on the local level reinforced themselves even more.[516] In the same book, White covers public opinion study in further concise and accurate detail. He points out how Russians were less concerned about constitutional reform (i.e. moving away from authoritarianism) or the Chechen situation (outside of the immediate perception of Yeltsin's handling of the war) and more worried about economic issues:

> 'What, so far as surveys were concerned, were the main concerns of ordinary Russians as the century drew to a close? For the most part, they had little to do with constitutional design, or Russia's place in a different world, or even the crisis in culture and public morality: most people were more concerned about how they were to earn a living in a rapidly changing economic environment. In the late 1990s, it was prices and delays in

[515] Boussard, Caroline, 'Civil Society and Democratisation,' Development and Democracy, (eds.) Ole Egstrom and Goren Hyden, Routledge, London and New York, 2002, pp. 170.
[516] White, Stephen, Russia's New Politics, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, pp. 265-266.

> the payment of wages that came first in the list of public concerns (only a third of those who were asked in 1999 had received the previous months salary in full and on time). The next most important public concerns were unemployment, the economic crisis, increasing crime, and the widening gap between rich and poor. The conflict in Chechnya had become a less acute concern after a settlement was brokered in 1996...'[517]

That the conflict in Chechnya would tend to continue to become less of an issue in public opinion following 1996 (even upon the reinstitution of hostilities in 1999) have been a facet of the analysis in this thesis. Some of these factors (unemployment, increasing crime, etc. as opposed to the Chechen war) were discussed as valuable benchmarks in the third chapter.

In the late 1990s, Boris Yeltsin was unable to carry out progressive policies towards the elimination, at least in perception, of an anarchic state. Thus, the idea of Vladimir Putin and his 'dictatorship of the law' was born. As shown from this chapter and in previous chapters, Russian administration policies on civil society and on corruption have at the very least constrained democracy in favour of order.

In the context of the Chechen wars, the second war was going to be a rectification of the first, although to what extent has been up for debate. Islamic extremism became the central enemy in the war, as opposed to Chechen nationalism, which in and of itself still harboured some disinterest, if not sympathy, in Russian public opinion. Not surprisingly perhaps, given changing world views, Islamic extremism became a watch word for anarchy (which was to be fought against at any price), while 'Chechen nationalism' still related to a semblance of order (or anti-anarchy, which was a sympathetic view for many Russians). Where the concepts of ordered nationalism and anarchy became co-mingled, the enemy within and the enemy without was

[517] *Ibid*, pp. 187.

confused, leading to enhanced powers of the president while taking advantage of the fears of the people in advancing a second war in Chechnya.

Conclusions

A primary point must be made on this subject.

All agreed (and even Putin through his policies) that in order to have democracy in any given country, there must be rule of law. As seen in chapter four and sections of this chapter, regarding the existence of rule of law, there is a continuing lack of this basic foundation of democracy in the Russian case.

To further this however, democracy can not be made up as it goes along, as Putin has tried to do. Laws can not be made to fit the circumstances. This thesis finds that Russia in this way is an authoritarian state, with Putin at the top. During the Putin administration, with the onset of the second war in Chechnya, Russia has backtracked along the road to democracy.

This is not to say that Russia does not have other attributes of a democracy. There are elections and there is voting. There is a constitution of some validity. There is a general level of freedom of speech (however viable it might be, given the state's use of terror tactics on journalists mentioned in this thesis).

However, there has yet to be an election for a head of state that has been completely free or fair. Putin's takeover from Yeltsin was largely rigged, albeit quite shrewdly in that case. There are parliamentary elections, but they have been dominated by a centrist bloc loyal to Putin, and

opposed weakly by progressive democratic forces and by a paper tiger Communist party that has stood little chance, given the weight of history, at positively opposing Putin.

Considering such reform, there are ways to recognize this in the context of Russian history. As Viacheslav Nikonov writes:

> 'Right now, we observe a return not so much to the Soviet, more to the Russian, as majorities in this basic thought, conscious matrix. Liberal reforms stir up the legacy of not only the 70-year Communist regime, but the last thousand years of Russian history.'[518]

However, specifically the Chechen wars, both in their own way, have degraded any attempt at Russian democracy. The first war burdened the government with a continuing threat to internal peace, much through its own failed policies. The second war directly drained Russian democracy by giving the Russian government a position to balance relative civil freedoms against the question of what might be considered 'necessary' to combat the 'threat.' This was the case, thereby presenting the opportunity to hamper media freedom and the development of rule of law.

Russia now stands at a crossroads, somewhat independent of policy in Chechnya. As detailed in research in chapters two, three and four, Russian society has accepted a need for conflict in Chechnya, there are few divisions in society on the issue, and the media has been muffled, and so therefore democratic debate on the issue has been silenced.

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[518] Nikonov, Viacheslav, 'Rossiiskoe i sovetskoe v massovom soznanii,' Sovremennaia Rossiiskaia Politika, Nikonov, Viacheslav (ed.), OLMA-PRESS, Moskva, 2003, p. 184.

The Russian government *could* attempt to regain the path of developing the rule of law and build a basis for a strong democracy, but this is unlikely. More easily, it could remain as a clientist state trapped in reactionary polity. Also, because of a more or less successful public relations policy on the second war, Russia has had more room to manoeuvre in the times that have followed, while of course acknowledging that the Chechen situation is a continuing threat to stability. As the 'lid' on the 'pot-boiler' of such conflicts rarely can be contained, essentially the region could blow up in importance at any given time.

As noted in the section on the theory of democratisation, Robert Dahl's supposition in his book Democracy and Its Critics that the idea of 'rule by the people' has been exploited 'almost universally' to justify authoritarianism particularly in the late 20th century in order supposedly to further democratic values, has been further established by this thesis. Putin and his parliamentary puppet United Russia party argue that they represent positive and progressive Russian thought, to the level of questioning the patriotism of possible media opposition. Putin's assertion and understanding of rule by the people precludes a position of political opposition without trivialization.

Yet, as previously discussed, given the minor weight of democratic tradition in Russia, Putin does mirror public opinion in many ways, and in turn the public mirrors him.

Jason Vaughn

Thesis Conclusions

The primary research question of this thesis was to ask **why there was a difference in Russian public opinion between the two wars in Chechnya**. First, there was a need to establish that there was indeed a difference in Russian public opinion between the two wars within two relatively similar time periods (see chapter two). In addition, there was a need to find out if there were particular cleavages in support or against the war within general Russian public opinion (see chapter three). No substantial differences within support or opposition to the wars was found in specific cleavages given the data available. Support for war appears to have cut across divisions within Russian public opinion.

In the fourth chapter on comparing governmental public relations on each of the Chechen wars, sometimes regarded as information warfare (IW), analysis supports the conclusion that Russian public opinion has come around to accept that, alongside the governmentally-projected appearance of competent leadership under President Vladimir Putin, the second war must not only be 'necessary' because of the threat to public order, but in order to stay proper, the war must be *perceived* to be 'necessary.' In Russian public opinion, it was deemed necessary that restraints be placed on the media. This is diametrically opposed to the case of the first war where separately it was perceived by the Russian public as a war of President Boris Yeltsin's 'choice.'

Further study on the effects of this (chapter five) in relation to the status of Russia's democracy found that along with a public understanding of the 'necessity' of the Chechen war came an erosion of some democratic freedoms (including freedom of the press, as in chapter four) and an

increase in presidential power in the hands of President Putin, thereby tipping Russia back towards authoritarianism.

In summary, there was a difference in Russian public opinion in regard to the two Chechen wars because Russian public opinion had lost confidence in democracy of the nature of Yeltsin's establishment of that concept (and, further, to call Yeltsin's 'democratic' government a democracy is a stain upon the meaning of democracy). Russian society's desire for stability and 'law and order' became synonymous with a strongman who could demonstrate these notions through a renewed Chechen campaign.

The Yeltsin years allowed fear of instability to overcome desires for freedom in Russian society. Yeltsin failed to establish a stable government, corruption ran rampant, and Russian public opinion tired of that environment. Through his rise to the presidency, his Chechen policies, and his administration's policies on the media, Putin has taken advantage of this fear to establish a new perceived order in Russia. Russia today is as close to being an autocracy as anything else.

Although there is still corruption equal to the Yeltsin years, the 'perception' of order portrayed by Putin has been enough to satisfy Russian public opinion, up to and including the policies of Putin in Chechnya.

At this point, the research chapters of this thesis should now be restated and detailed for a summary of other points made, along with some additional comments there have been established, in order to reflect a number of supplementary findings.

Chapter Two

Chapter two examined changing trends in public opinion during the two time periods of war in Chechnya of 1994 to 1996 and 1999 to 2002. Although the second war did not end in 2002, these two time periods have been sufficient to show trends in Russian domestic acuity within each of the two wars in Chechnya as well as to analyse what these differences in inclination say about changes in overall Russian political society as it relates to the Russian government and Chechen policy. Strong variations were found in the public perceptions of each war period that corresponded to the coinciding environment and circumstances of the time.

In the case of the first war, the Russian public did not see a clear need to invade Chechnya. This combined with a deepening loss of confidence in Boris Yeltsin himself and his administration's post-Soviet era policies caused extensive dissatisfaction in Russian public opinion for the Russian government. An expansion in terrorism and general anarchy in the North Caucasus region was blamed on the Yeltsin administration, and not on the Chechens themselves.

In that case, offensive use of the military was unpopular and perceived to be unnecessary. From the Russian government side, it has been shown in parts of this thesis as well as in research by others (as detailed in the literature review/chapter one and in sections of chapter two) that then-President Boris Yeltsin was effectively out of ideas for re-invigorating his administration and finding the public support that he had lost since the days of his higher popularity in the immediate post-Soviet era. Yeltsin's mistake was that he believed patriotism, and thereafter confidence in his administration, could be engendered by the use of the military in a 'short' war. This proved to be greatly out of step with public opinion, and the public regarded it as such.

As compared to this, Russian public opinion had changed by 1999. The Russian public by that year had gotten tired of the damage to pride created by the loss of empire. Bombings on Russian soil blamed on Chechens separate from the context of an on-going war brought support for

Vladimir Putin as a politician of rising prominence conveniently to portray himself as a leader espousing law and order. Nevertheless, the second Chechen war has also been progressively unpopular; however the Russian people have accepted the perception of 'necessity' in the context of the conflict. Russian public opinion put the blame for the war on what Putin has termed the 'terrorists,' and not on the Putin administration.

Chapter Three

The third chapter examined cleavages in Russian public opinion and their relationships to the Chechen war. Few clear connections were successfully noted, and so therefore the conclusion has been made that, within Russian public opinion, what divisions that did exist in support or opposition of the war cut across traditional cleavages.

In studies of the eight cleavages of Russian society, popularity and public support on the Chechen war issue has been found to not be sourced by a particularly cogent constituency. In almost all groups and sub-groups where differences could technically be found, such as where women seemed slightly more equally divided than not, such divergences were relatively slight. Much attention in this context was reflected back on conclusions found in the second chapter concerning overall trends in public support of the Chechen war. Differences in Russian public opinion on the war in Chechnya seem to be focused not on any particular section of Russian society supporting or failing to support the war, but instead on general society gauging the level on which the Chechen war is determined to be a 'problem,' and then focusing on the relative level of confidence in the successive governments to solve the problem.

As promoted by the Russian government, there is seen here very little choice in the matter as presented to Russian public opinion, which is perhaps the point. Wars in Chechnya within this

context seem to be a throw-back to the times of 'imperial' wars, and the Russian government, while feigning democracy, has become an increasingly 'imperial' state, where criticism of the 'king' is indeed frowned upon. Society, crossing many internal cleavages, either has or has not had confidence in the policies of the 'king.'

One further point must be related as pertaining to chapters two and three. It has been noticeable that the central enemy even in the second war has not been the Chechens as an ethnic group; studies found for this thesis find this to be the case. Russian administration political actors have stressed that the Chechen war has not been an ethnic war, as the Chechen war has been portrayed frequently by the Chechen resistance. Russian society, from this study and others, has seemed to accept in principle the idea of an independent Chechnya. Instead, as again it must be stressed, the enemy as portrayed by Yeltsin and Putin has been the 'terrorists' and not the 'Chechens.' Consistently, this difference in regard for the war in Russian public opinion has been demonstrable.

Chapter Four

Further on the question of Russian political society on the war issue, chapter four looked at the question of media manipulation on Russian public opinion and on this relationship to the Chechen wars. From the experience of the first Chechen war, this chapter found that the Russian government engendered a view of the necessity of media control and 'strong' (indeed heavy-handed) policy on public relations. From the government standpoint, the media became a kind of scapegoat for the policies of the Yeltsin administration in initiation and management of the first war. The Putin administration, in directing a second war, apparently decided that the real enemy was an uncontrolled press, and therefore to use what means it could to force Russian public opinion to accept the war as being necessary. This has included the use of extra-

constitutional and extra-legal methods, damaging some of the freedoms promised in the Russian post-Soviet era and consequently Russia's democracy. Especially since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in America, as detailed by John Russell, the Putin administration has been able to blur the lines of contextualisation in which the Chechen war has been seen:

> '[Putin has been able] to eradicate memories of Yeltsin's 'bad' war, by presenting the entire confrontation with the Chechens as, if not a 'good', then certainly a 'necessary' war.'[519]

In this way, no longer is the Chechen war seen as good or bad, but as something simply justified.

It is true, and must be pointed out again, that both wars were unpopular. By the time of Putin, however, the perception of the conflict in Chechnya as a policy had changed, even though militarily, except for some improvements in strategy concerning front line troop makeup, there was little difference in tactics. Civilians have often been the target intentionally or not in both wars, while the Russian military machine has continued to attempt to use overwhelming force and air power to eliminate Chechen military elements and strong points.

Assisted by state attempts to dominate the media, and by a public fearful of terrorism thereby possibly displaying the consequences of a second failed Chechen war, the relative unpopularity of the first war has been overcome in Russian public opinion in the case of the second. Collectively, Russian society no longer perceives the war as a personal choice of a President as in the days of Yeltsin, but instead as a necessary evil. However, it should be reiterated that necessity, as seen in this thesis, does not equate to popularity.

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[519] Russell, John, 'A War by Any Other Name: Chechnya, 11 September and the War Against Terrorism,' Chechnya: From Past to Future, (ed.) Richard Sakwa, Anthem Press, London, 2005, p. 240.

Just because they know they have to do it does not make the job more palatable.

Chapter Five

The fifth chapter was written to discuss the relationship between Russian public opinion, the Chechen wars, and the question of whether Russia is democratic, authoritarian, or something in between. It was found that in the 1990s, there was a period of *potential* democracy that in the Putin era lapsed back towards a type of autocratic authoritarianism more commonplace perhaps in so-called 'Third World' countries, as demonstrated by this research on Russian public opinion and the two Chechen wars. This chapter established the basis for answering the research question as detailed in the thesis introduction.

Final Thoughts

Having conducted research for this thesis, the author further concludes that (somewhat indirectly on the topic of Russian 'democracy') there are six elements of importance often referred to in different fashions within Russian public opinion that are worth mentioning at this point. In interviews conducted for this thesis, often these subjects were notably prominent and, as a final point of debate, should be presented here. To list them, these are:

1) Stability
2) Economy
3) Mythmaking
4) Ethnicity
5) Democracy
6) Authoritarianism

Out of all of these, as shown by this thesis overall, the most important seems to have become stability, following a shift in Russian public opinion between the two wars in Chechnya. During the first war, fundamental stability of Russia was not seen to be in danger. During the second war, stability seems to have taken on a pre-eminent dominance over the other five possible elements.

For instance, from data graphed in chapter three concerning overall percentages of 'weak hawks,'[520] there is a strong desire for stability over economy. Mythmaking, or those who support purely a strong Russia myth, seems to be quite prominent also, although not as powerful as the more fundamental element of stability. As shown frequently, while being a strong element of Russian public opinion in its own right, ethnicity seems to be far from a dominant underlying point on which to analyze Russian society's change in support of strong policy in Chechnya.

In Russian societal thought, the question as debated in the fifth chapter of democracy versus authoritarianism has also become a largely moot point. The efforts of the Russian political elite to 'guide' the political system has dominated to the point where Russian public opinion does not consider the terms on which their own democracy is being lost, as seen through the often successful attempts by the Russian government to limit open criticism of policies.

Indeed following from these concepts, some observations are perhaps necessary to be reiterated:

As for the author's viewpoint, generally, ethnic Russians with whom I spoke during research for this thesis accepted the war, although they were not supporters of the war, at least in the traditional sense. The vast majority of those who were young enough to serve in the Army were

[520] Again, those who end their support of the Chechen war following a degree of resource loss in men or material.

opposed to actually serving in the Army, much less willing to serve in Chechnya. Nevertheless, even they were willing to accept the war, or at least not to vocally oppose the war. They were willing to see the 'requirements' of the Russian army pacifying Chechnya, especially as long as they did not have to have to contribute to the war effort.

This brings up again the question of economy versus stability. However, stability wins again, as the effects of a bad situation in economy and resources has been softened greatly by the rise in oil prices and the general disconnect seen by those who have no personal involvement in relation to those who have been sent to fight on the Russian side in this newest conflict.

Again on the idea of the authoritarian/democracy question, there is the continuing theme of confidence. In Ellen Carnaghan's 2001 *Slavic Review* article where she talks about her many interviews with Russian citizens concerning democracy, she finds that:

> 'Most of my interviewees do not share many of the particular beliefs supposedly characteristic of traditional, undemocratic Russian political culture. Most of them are ready to vote, to obey the law, and, save exorbitant tax rates on private businesses, to pay their taxes. Similarly, most are ready to countenance the disorder of representative government, even under conditions when they have practically no faith that their so-called representatives care a whit about the people they are supposed to represent. Few were willing to sacrifice newfound freedoms to autocratic leaders who could get things done. On the other hand, my respondents had little confidence in the presidency, less in the State Duma, and none in the police. Many of my respondents so despaired of ever having well-functioning political institutions that they were unwilling to take action to improve the ones they had.'[521]

[521] Carnaghan, Ellen, 'Thinking About Democracy: Interviews with Russian Citizens,' *Slavic Review*, Vol. 60, No. 2, Summer 2001, p. 363. (pp. 336-366)

Insofar as these sentiments relate to my study of the Chechen war, the author has found that these points are correct up until the point where the conflict there becomes a clear perceived danger to Russian society. At that point, as Carnaghan elaborates, Putin's policies are accepted on the basis that:

> 'In many respects, my interviewees' opinions seemed to be reflections of the institutions under which they lived, rather than cultural predispositions that made democracy suspect.'[522]

The idea of Putin as simply a competent leader clearly dominates, as opposed to the *perception* of authoritarianism, even when the perception might be justified to deem his administration to be clearly as such. The research in this thesis supports and adds to the prominence and validation of this argument.

To summarize, Russia has little hope in changing the Chechen war as an issue at this junction, beyond the attempts at Chechenization seen in recent years. However, outside of this, the government is virtually unable to intensify the campaign there in any imaginative way, and it cannot pull support. As almost by tradition, the future likely sees Russia and Chechnya remain locked in an ongoing struggle in the region.

Over the course of this thesis, the Chechen war has been used to evaluate Russian public opinion in both of the aspects suggested in the title.

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[522] *Ibid*, p. 363.

Russian public opinion formed (*formation*, the first concept of this thesis) along the conceptual lines of decisions made in the environment of the fall of the Soviet Union. This included the adaptation of the theory and practice of democracy to a population that never before had experienced such a mode of government as an accepted ideal. Unsurprisingly based on history, part of this adaptation has been to impose a uniquely Russian 'style' to democracy.

Over the *evolution* of Russian public opinion (the second part of the enquiry), this has meant an imposition of a heavier authoritarian element to what exists as 'Russian democracy' than in most other longer-term democracies. Necessities of the Chechen war (and the 'war on terrorism' whether or not the two are in concert) have hastened an acceptance of authoritarianism beyond what some adherents to democracy, both internally and externally, have found comfortable. Yet, this has not been perceived as a threat by Russian society, and indeed the Russian public accepts such policy as necessary.

Will democratic thought, over the long term, rebound in Russia? Will democracy one day be attained? For now, it is difficult to tell. As discussed, the establishment of the rule of law and a neutral state capability to enforce it are the most important and biggest topics of discussion for any further analysis. The initiation of the Chechen wars has reflected an overtly undemocratic polity, and the creation and continuity of policies meant to continue the conflict have eroded Russian democracy greatly.

APPENDIX A

Jason Vaughn

Thesis: 'Russian Public Opinion and the Two Chechen Wars, 1994-96 and 1999-2002: Formation and Evolution'

These graphs cover most of the data used in this thesis; other data as cited from other sources unavaliable at the time appendix designed.

Chapter Two, Graph One

Support - President of Russia	1994		
	May	July	September
Entirely Support His Actions	8.8	7.9	6.5
Agree With Some of His Actions	31.5	32.2	29.8
Consider That He Should Resign	37.9	37.6	40.5
Difficult to Answer	21.8	22.2	22.9
No Answer	0.1	0.1	0.3

Chapter Two, Graph Two

"Trust" in Yeltsin	VCIOM Express				
	1994				
	January	March	July	September	October
Absolutely Do Not Trust	14	22	33	30	31
To a Great Degree, I Do Not Trust	15	14	9	12	14
More Do Not Trust, Than Trust	17	14	15	15	16
Equally Trust and Distrust	19	17	17	20	14
More Do Trust, Than Not	13	9	8	6	6
To a Great Degree, I Trust	8	8	6	3	4
Absolutely Trust	4	6	3	3	3
Difficult to Answer	10	10	9	11	12

Chapter Two, Graph Three

"Support" in Yeltsin	VCIOM Express						
	1994-4 16.04.1994 - 07.05.1994	1994-5 12.05.1994 - 30.05.1994	1994-6 06.06.1994 - 26.06.1994	1994-7 06.07.1994 - 27.07.1994	1994-9 13.09.1994 - 07.10.1994	1995-3 10.03.1995 - 03.04.1995	1995-7 03.07.1995 - 21.07.1995
I support his actions completely.	9	9	7	8	7	2	2
I don't agree with some of his actions.	33	33	34	34	31	26	25
I consider that he should resign.	38	37	38	36	40	57	56
Difficult to answer	21	22	21	23	22	16	17

Chapter Two, Graph Five

"Who Will You Vote For?"	VCIOM Express 1996					
	January	February	March	April	May	June
B. Yeltsin	8	11	15	18	28	36
G. Zyuganov	20	24	25	26	27	24
A. Lebed	10	8	8	10	6	10
G. Yavlinsky	13	9	11	10	9	8
V. Zhirinovsky	10	12	9	8	7	6
S. Fyodorov	8	7	7	8	7	3
A. Tuleyev					2	1
M. Gorbachev	1	1	1	1	1	1
V. Bryntsalov				0	0	0
M. Shakkum					0	0
Yu. Vlasov				0	0	0
Someone else	13	21	8	6	1	0
None of the Above	2	3	4	2	1	2
Hard to say	15	14	12	9	10	9

Chapter Two, Graph Six

"Trust" in Yeltsin	VCIOM Express				
	1996-5	1996-6	1996-7	1996-9	1996-11
	22.03.1996 - 27.03.1996	04.04.1996 - 10.04.1996	17.04.1996 - 24.04.1996	26.04.1996 - 05.05.1996	31.05.1996 - 05.06.1996
Entirely Trust	5	5	5	7	8
Basically Trust	20	22	21	26	27
Basically Don't Trust	24	26	26	23	21
Completely Don't Trust	40	39	38	32	34
Do Not Know	0	0	1	0	0
Difficult to Answer	11	8	9	11	10

Chapter Two, Graph Seven

Trends in Support for War	2000											
	January	February	March	April	May	July	June	August	September	October	November	December
Continue the war effort	68	70	69	68	56	55	50	50	50	44	45	47
Begin negotiations	24	22	23	23	35	33	41	39	37	47	48	42
	2001											
	January	February	March	April	May	July	June	August	September	October	November	December
	48	38	44	36	34	33	36	30	41	40	43	43
	41	50	46	54	58	55	53	59	45	50	48	48
	2002											
	January	February	March	April	May	July	June	August	September	October	November	
	38	34	33	34	31	33	29	31	34	46	48	36
	51	57	60	58	62	59	61	59	57	45	43	54

Chapter Two, Graph Eight

'To what degree do you approve or disapprove of activities of President Putin?'	2000		
	October	November	December
Entirely Approve	25	24	26
More Often Approve, Than Not	46	42	46
More Often Not Approve	13	16	12
Entirely Not Approve	6	7	6
Difficult to Answer/Refuse to Answer	9	10	10

Chapter Two, Graph Nine

	VCIOM Express					
	2000					
	January	March	May	July	September	November
Putin's Performance (Average) (Rating 1 to 10)		5.92	5.67	5.39	5.17	5.18
	2001					
	January	March	May	July	September	November
	5.73	5.51	5.42	5.58	5.76	5.98
	2002					
	January	March	May	July	September	November
	6.08	5.83	5.93	5.89	6.23	6.36

Chapter Two, Graph Ten

'How do you rank in the current time the material position of your family?'	VCIOM Express									
	1994 May	1995 May	1996 May	1997 May	1998 May	1999 May	2000 May	2000 July	2000 September	2000 October
Very good	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Good	5	5	5	4	4	3	5	6	4	5
Medium	48	45	43	41	39	38	48	46	45	46
Bad	33	35	38	38	39	39	31	34	37	35
Very bad	11	12	12	15	16	17	13	12	12	11
Difficult to answer	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2
	2001 January	2001 March	2001 May	2001 July	2001 September	2001 October	2001 November	2002 January	2002 March	2002 May
Very good	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0
Good	5	4	5	7	7	6	6	8	7	7
Medium	51	50	54	51	53	52	51	49	53	53
Bad	32	32	31	31	29	32	33	33	31	32
Very bad	10	10	8	9	8	9	7	8	7	6
Difficult to answer	1	4	1	1	2	2	3	1	2	2

Chapter Two, Graph Eleven

(abbreviated ques.) 'What do you think should take place in a hostage situation?'	VCIOM Express 2001 September	2002 September	2002 November
Neutralize the criminals even if it result	33	33	53
Avoid bloodshed at all costs	58	54	37
Don't know	10	12	10

Chapter Two, Graph Twelve

"What feelings does information about operations of Russian troops the in Chechnya arouse in you?"	VCIOM Express 1999 November	2000 July	2001 Juni	2002 December
Admiration	3	2	3	1
Satisfaction	21	15	10	6
Anxiety	55	63	55	62
Shame	9	7	12	15
No Special Feeling	8	7	14	10
I don't know	4	6	6	6

Chapter Three, Graph One

'In general what is your attitude towards the Chechens?'	09.11.1998 - 23.11.1998	01.11.2000 - 14.11.2000	02.11.2002 - 16.11.2002
With sympathy and interest	2	1	1
Easy, as with any other, without special feelings	48	45	34
With irritation and hostility	29	31	36
With mis-trust and fear	21	22	30

Chapter Three, Graphs Two and Three

Anti-War Responses	26-29.11.1999	24-27.12.1999	14-17.1.2000	21-24.1.2000	25-28.2.2000	17-20.3.2000	7-10.4.2000	26-29.5.2000	20-25.7.2000	22-25.9.2000	27-30.10.2000
Overall 'Doves'	27	22	23	24	22	23	23	35	41	37	47
Male Doves	37	32	24	29	23	25	28	29	33	35	36
Female Doves	63	68	76	71	77	75	72	71	67	65	64
Overall 'Weak Hawks'	17	16	21	17	11	12	14	14	21	19	18
Male Weak Hawks	42	32	41	37	31	32	38	46	40	36	43
Female Weak Hawks	58	68	59	63	69	68	62	54	60	64	57

Chapter Three, Graph Four

Who Do You Trust?'	President	Army	Organs of State
Overall - Trust A Lot	52	33	22
Males - Trust A Lot	50	35	26
Females -Trust a Lot	54	32	20
Overall - Do Not Trust	8	18	19
Males - Do Not Trust	9	19	21
Females - Do Not Trust	7	17	17

Chapter Three, Graph Five

April 2000 - Chechnya - Separation From Russia?	18-29	30-59	60+	Total
It has already happened in fact.	9	7	6	7
I would be pleased by such an event.	23	19	15	19
It wouldn't make any difference to me.	21	17	17	18
I'm against this, but I accept it.	25	28	31	28
We must prevent it by by all means, inc	22	29	31	28

Chapter Three, Graphs Six and Seven

Anti-War Responses	26-29.11.1999	24-27.12.1999	14-17.1.2000	21-24.1.2000	25-28.2.2000	17-20.3.2000	7-10.4.2000	26-29.5.2000	20-25.7.2000	22-25.9.2000	27-30.10.2000
Overall 'Doves'	27	22	23	24	22	23	23	35	41	37	47
Overall 'Weak Hawks'	17	16	21	17	11	12	14	14	21	19	18
Doves - 18-24	14	20	12	13	16	20	12	13	14	14	12
Weak Hawks - 18-24	19	12	14	16	14	9	18	18	15	15	10
Doves - 25-39	30	24	29	24	26	29	29	29	28	29	27
Weak Hawks - 25-39	31	32	30	31	32	35	35	16	27	34	31
Doves - 40-54	26	23	24	22	23	22	24	21	22	23	27
Weak Hawks - 40-54	26	26	26	25	26	19	23	30	31	27	20
Doves - 55 and Older	30	33	34	41	34	29	35	37	37	35	34
Weak Hawks - 55 and Older	34	30	30	29	29	36	24	36	27	25	39

Chapter Three, Graph Eight

Who Do You Trust?'	President	Army	Organs of State
Overall - Trust A Lot	52	33	22
Under 29 - Trust A Lot	54	29	26
30-49 -Trust a Lot	48	32	21
50 and Older - Trust A Lot	55	37	21
Overall - Do Not Trust	8	18	19
Under 29 - Do Not Trust	6	25	17
30-49 - Do Not Trust	8	19	21
50 and Older - Do Not Trust	8	13	19

Chapter Three, Graphs Nine, and Ten

Anti-War Responses	26-29.11.1999	24-27.12.1999	14-17.1.2000	21-24.1.2000	25-28.2.2000	17-20.3.2000	7-10.4.2000	26-29.5.2000	20-25.7.2000	22-25.9.2000	27-30.10.2000
Overall 'Doves'	27	22	23	24	22	23	23	35	41	37	47
Overall 'Weak Hawks'	17	16	21	17	11	12	14	14	21	19	18
Doves - Big Cities	40	45	38	34	38	40	43	40	39	38	36
Weak Hawks - Big Cities	36	35	33	34	49	39	43	36	42	45	40
Doves - Small Towns	33	29	29	33	36	35	27	33	33	33	36
Weak Hawks - Small Towns	31	40	46	40	34	33	25	34	35	28	35
Doves - Countryside	27	26	34	33	26	25	30	25	28	28	28
Weak Hawks - Countryside	33	25	21	26	17	28	32	30	28	27	25

Chapter Three, Graph Eleven

Supporters vs. Opponents of War According to Party	Supporters	Opponents
CPRF	29	26
NDR	28	18
KRO	22	14
Yabloko	20	21
"Women of Russia"	17	31
LDPR	17	*
APR	*	12

Chapter Three, Graph Twelve

Chechnya as a 'Problem'	All	"Unity" Block	Communists	Fatherland All-Russia	Union of Right Forces	Yabloko	Zhirinovsky Block	"Did not accept participants in elections."	"I was not able to participate. "
War actions in Chechnya	39.2	43.9	39.9	40.8	51.1	47.8	40.3	34.9	49.7

Chapter Three, Graph Thirteen

Supporters who consider the war as a "Problem" - January 2001	All	Putin	Zyuganov	Tuleev	Yavlinsky	"Against all"	"Did not accept participants in election/Under 18"
War actions in Chechnya	39.2	46.3	32.4	50.7	47.8	20.5	36.2

Chapter Three, Graph Fourteen

Those who consider the Chechen war to be a "Problem"	All	Putin	Zyuganov	Yavlinsky	"Against all"	Difficult to answer
War actions in Chechnya	21.7	21.9	22.6	10.1	21	10.5

Chapter Three, Graphs Fifteen, Sixteen, Seventeen and Eighteen

Anti-War Responses	26-29.11.1999	24-27.12.1999	14-17.1.2000	21-24.1.2000	25-28.2.2000	17-20.3.2000	7-10.4.2000	26-29.5.2000	20-25.7.2000	22-25.9.2000	27-30.10.2000
Overall 'Doves'	27	22	23	24	22	23	23	35	41	37	47
Overall 'Weak Hawks'	17	16	21	17	11	12	14	14	21	19	18
Doves - Managers	9	3	8	7	3	8	•	7	6	5	4
Weak Hawks - Managers	5	4	9	4	3	4	•	9	6	7	4
Doves - Specialists	7	8	11	8	12	10	•	11	12	10	13
Weak Hawks - Specialists	14	17	16	14	15	13	•	9	11	15	21
Doves - Employees	6	5	7	6	10	10	•	7	6	8	7
Weak Hawks - Employees	7	6	5	9	10	4	•	2	6	9	2
Doves - Qualified Workers	23	27	21	20	19	15	•	19	20	22	22
Weak Hawks -- Qualified Workers	28	21	21	23	15	22	•	27	25	22	20
Doves - Students	5	5	4	6	6	6	•	6	4	5	5
Weak Hawks - Students	9	7	4	11	6	5	•	3	8	4	4
Doves - Pensioners	30	29	33	38	31	26	•	35	35	33	33
Weak Hawks - Pensioners	28	29	26	29	30	35	•	36	31	20	33

Chapter Three, Graph Nineteen

Those who consider the Chechen war to be a "Problem" according to self-ranked class	All	Social Status Rating				
		Lower class	Lower-middle class	Medium-middle class	Higher-middle class/Upper class	Difficult to answer
Continuing war in Chechnya	16.6	11.9	16.6	18.7	11.9	16.9

Chapter Three, Graph Twenty

Those who consider the Chechen war to be a "Problem" according to money demand	All	"We make only ends meet... no money for food."	"Money only for products/money for clothes difficult."	"Money exists for food and clothes, but not for things of lasting use."	"We are able to afford things for lasting use, but not expensive items."
Continuing war in Chechnya	16.6	12.3	15.8	19.6	22.1

Chapter Four, Graphs One and Two

Surveys of TV watchers	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Difficult to Answer
Percentage of those who watch state-c	56	24	17	3	<1
Percentage of those who watch NTV:	52	23	14	10	<1

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Standard Interview Questions:

The many interviews conducted for this thesis between 2001 and 2006, both informal and formal, generally followed this question format. These questions generally formed the base of the conversations when held. By no means is this a complete list of questions asked; however, these questions would reliably get the conversation going on my topic:

(1) What do you think of the war in Chechnya?
(2) What do you think the outcome of the war will be?
(3) How do Russians regard (or think about) Chechens?
(4) How does [this event] change your consideration of [Chechens/Russians] in general?
(5) How important is the war in Chechnya in your life?

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(It must be mentioned at this point that in 2003, under the Putin administration, Yuri Levada was sacked as head of VTsIOM. Levada then set up VTsIOM-A, which was renamed the Levada Centre. Some of the sources used in this thesis and mentioned in this bibliography were gathered from the two successor organizations, VTsIOM-A and the Levada Centre.)

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